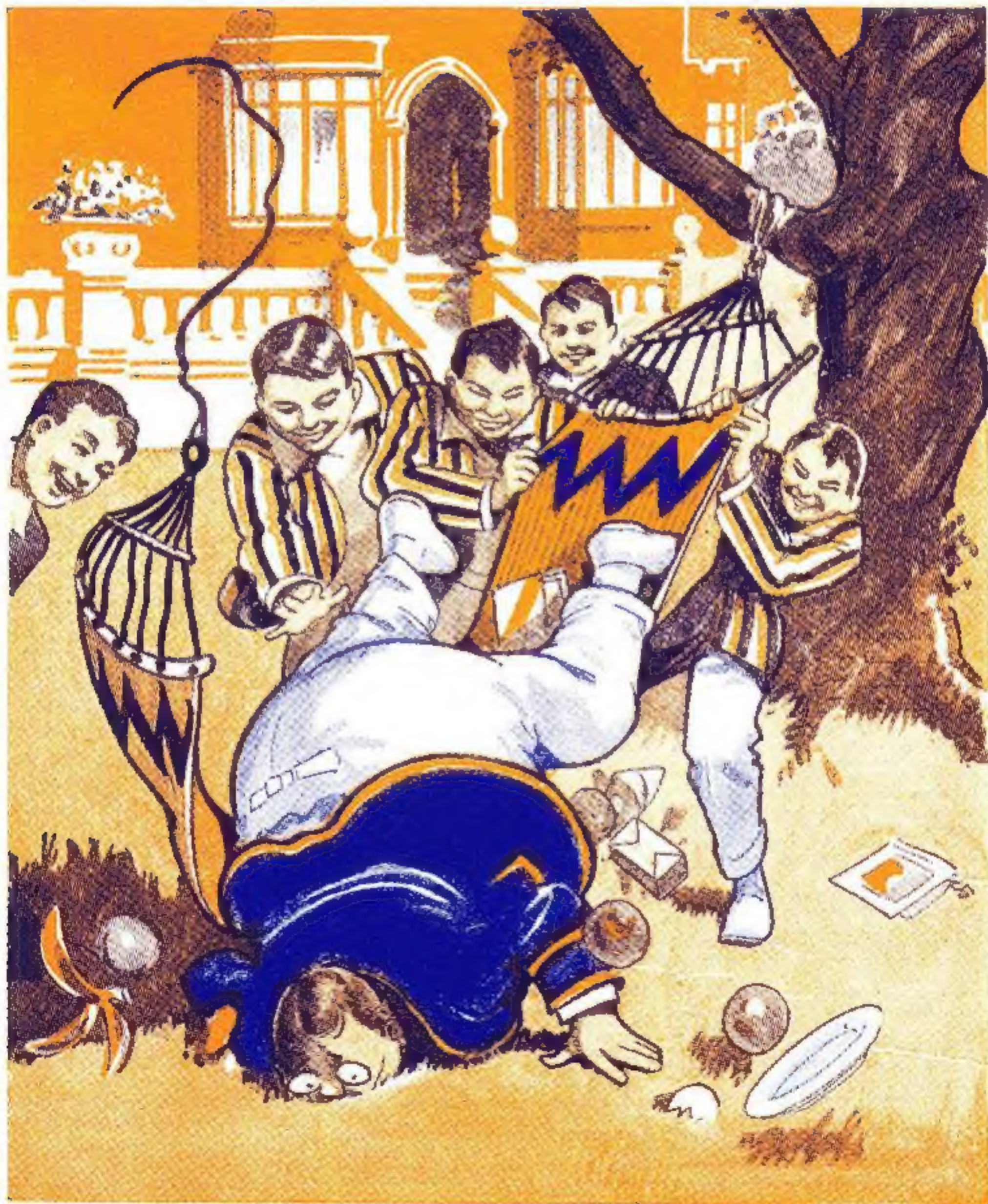


BATS AUTOGRAPHED BY AUSTRALIAN TEST HEROES!
MUST BE WON. LAST WEEK OF CONTEST.

The **MAGNET**^{2^D}





THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Dump for Bunter!

ZOOOOOOM!

The drone of the engine was low at first; but it grew louder and louder, like the buzzing of a swarm of angry bees.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked up at the blue sky, shading their eyes from the bright August sunshine.

Billy Bunter, stretched luxuriously in a hammock on the lawn, opened his eyes with an alarmed blink.

"I say, you fellows—"

The roar of the engine was so loud, so near, that it seemed to Bunter as if the plane was rushing down on him. He grabbed his spectacles, jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked round him.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "That plane's flying jolly low."

"Look out for your nappers!" grinned Johnny Bull.

ZOOOOOOM!

"I say, you fellows!" howled Bunter.

But the Famous Five did not heed Bunter. They stood, with rather startled eyes fixed on the aeroplane.

It had come into sight over the tall trees of the park, flying so low that it seemed almost to graze the tree-tops. It came on towards Wharton Lodge with a roar that was almost deafening.

"Must be in trouble and looking for a landing-place!" said Harry Wharton.

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"I say, you fellows, they can't land here!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "Call out to them to clear off!"

"Fathhead!"

Billy Bunter sat up in the hammock. His little round eyes widened behind his big spectacles. There had been tea on the lawn; and Billy Bunter had done justice to that tea—more than justice. There was so much cake packed away inside Bunter that the hammock had seemed a haven of refuge. Bunter had sunk into it with a sigh of relief, and was disinclined to move again. But he moved quite quickly as the plane

But the plane rose when it looked as if disaster was inevitable, and soared away over the ancient roof of the old Lodge, so low that it seemed as if it must carry away some of the red-brick chimneys. But it cleared them and vanished past the building.

Harry Wharton caught his breath.

"What the thump are they up to?" he exclaimed indignantly. "If it isn't a forced landing, what the dickens do they mean by flying so low?"

"Some silly ass stunting!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I'd like to tell him what I think of his stunting!" growled Bob Cherry. "The potty ass came within an inch or two of crashing."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

The roar of the plane could still be heard, but it was out of sight beyond Wharton Lodge now. The juniors' hearts had been beating very fast.

"Well, they're gone!" said Nugent.

"Somebody was looking down as they passed over us," said Harry. "I caught a glimpse of a face—"

"So did I," said Bob. "Thank goodness it cleared the house! Why, hallo, hallo, hallo! They're coming back!"

"Great pip!"

ZOOOOOOOOM!

The aeroplane rose into sight against the blue sky beyond Wharton Lodge, climbing.

High in the sunshine, it circled, and swept back again over the house. The roar of the engine, that had almost died

From cover of darkness, under shelter of subterfuge, the merciless hand of TANG WANG has sought to strike and has failed . . . And now, like a bird of prey, swoops a desperate messenger of death from the sky!

roared down towards the lawn where the startled juniors stood.

"My hat!" exclaimed Nugent.

"They'll hit the house!"

"The crashfulness will be terrific!" ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Plenty mucher crash!" murmured Winn Lang.

"Look out!"

For the moment it seemed that the rushing plane must strike the facade of Wharton Lodge. Bunter blinked at it in horror. Bunter had left no stone unturned to land himself at Wharton Lodge for the summer holidays. Now he wished that he hadn't



away, deepened and intensified. Again a million angry bees seemed to be buzzing.

"No likee!" said Wun Lung, the Chinese junior of the Greyfriars Remove. "Me no likee that planes!"

"Me no likee plenty too muchee!" said Hop Hi, his brother, his almond eyes fixed on the circling plane.

"Blessed if I like it either," said Harry Wharton. "What the merry thump can they be up to? They seem to be looking for trouble."

Over the roofs of the Lodge the plane swept, over the lawn where the juniors stood with upturned faces watching, and on towards the trees of the park at a distance. There, flying low, it circled over the trees.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter. "Help me out of this hammock! I say, I'm not going to stay here to be smashed! Lend me a hand, Wharton!"

"Don't bother!"

"Hoast! Lend me a hand, Bob!"

"I'll lend you a boot, if you don't shut up!" answered Bob, without turning his head. His eyes were fixed on the mysterious plane, which interested him much more than William George Bunter did.

"Wun Lung, you beastly heathen, lend me a hand."

Wun Lung grinned.

"Me lendee handee!" he assented.

Bunter's request was not couched in polite language; but the little Chinese of Greyfriars was an obliging fellow; likewise, he was much given to practical joking—especially with Bunter as the object. For some reason, inexplicable to Bunter Wun Lung did not like and admire him as he ought to have been liked and admired. Perhaps Bunter's manners did not appeal to the junior from the Flowery Land, where they are

very particular in matters of politeness.

"You helpee, Hop Hi?" he said.

"Me helpee plenty muchee!" grinned Hop Hi.

And the two Chinese, with covert winks at Harry Wharton & Co., helped Bunter. So did the Famous Five. Bunter did not find it easy to get out of a swinging hammock, especially after he had loaded up with foodstuffs with an utter disregard of the Plimsoll line.

"Hold me!" he gasped. "Not my ear, you heathen idiot! Ow! Not my nose, you other heathen chump! Wow! Take my arms, you silly fatheads! Now hold the hammock, and I'll be out in a jiffy! Yooooooooop!"

Bunter was out in less than a jiffy. Bump!

"Whoooooop!" roared Bunter, as he made a forced landing.

Perhaps it was due to the way the juniors helped him. Certainly, Bunter could have got out like that without help.

He rolled in the grass and roared.

"Me velly sorry!" said Wun Lung, in his soft voice. "Pool ole Bunteree velly clumsy."

"Plenty muchee clumsy!" said Hop Hi.

"You—you—you beastly heathens!" gasped Bunter. "You did that on purpose! Look here, Wharton—"

"Dry up!"

"Look here, if this is the way you allow a guest to be treated, I'm jolly well not staying here!" roared Bunter. "Nice treatment, ain't it, after pressing me to come here, and—"

"Fathead!"

Zooooooooooooom!

The roar of the approaching aeroplane cut short the flow of Bunter's eloquence.

He gave one startled blink up at the flashing object against the blue, his bolted into the house as fast as his fat little legs could carry him. Puffing and blowing, Billy Bunter vanished into Wharton Lodge, unhindered by Harry Wharton & Co., who were watching the mysterious plane with a wonder that was now tinged with alarm.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Foe from Above!

HARRY WHARTON stared at the plane, catching his breath.

It had circled over Wharton Lodge, circled back to the park, and was now approaching the lawn, in front of the house below the terrace, a second time, with a deafening boom.

Unless the pilot was insane it was difficult to imagine what he was up to. It was evidently not a case of trouble and a forced landing—the plane was completely under control. If the man was stunting it was a puzzle why he had chosen Wharton Lodge as the scene of his stunts. It was hardly to be supposed that a foolishly frolicsome airman was seeking to give them a fright. But what he was up to was a mystery.

Again the plane came rushing over the party on the lawn, looking, as before, as if it would rush into the building ahead.

Then suddenly, sharply, through the roar of the engine, came a succession of swift staccato reports.

Crack, crack, crack!

Wharton gave a yell of amazement. Something struck the tea-table only a few inches from Wun Lung, and smashed crockery right and left. Something struck the ground at Wharton's feet; something whizzed by Bob Cherry's

jar so closely that he felt the wind of the bullet, and gave a horrified gasp.

"They're firing!" yelled Wharton.

"Firing! Great pip!"

"Hook it!"

"Into the house!" shouted Wharton. "Wun Lung—Hop Hi—quick! Run for it! Run for your lives!"

For as the bullets crashed and smashed on the level green lawn, Wharton knew!

It was another attempt on the life of the Chinese junior—another blow from the hand of Tang Wang, the mandarin, in far-off China.

It was a blow that was utterly unexpected and unlooked-for; even Ferrers Locke, with all the precautions he had taken for Wun Lung's safety, had not suspected an attack from the sky.

Men posted by the Baker Street detective were watching the Lodge, guarding against a new attempt on the part of Tang Wang's emissaries. So careful was the watch that it was impossible for an enemy to reach the Chinese junior by ordinary ways.

But even Locke had not foreseen this.

"Hook it!" roared Johnny Bull.

The juniors bolted from the open lawn to the shelter of the house. In the open they were utterly at the mercy of the marksman in the plane. True, now that they guessed the object of the attack, they were aware that it was only Wun Lung's life that was aimed at. But bullets were no respecters of persons.

Wharton caught Wun Lung by the arm and hurried him along at breathless speed. Bob Cherry half-carried little Hop Hi.

Crack, crack, crack, crack!

"The villains!" panted Wharton.

Now he knew why the plane had flown low over the lawn—to make sure that the Chinese junior was there with the others before the enemy showed their hand. And knowing that he was there, the plane had circled back, to fly over them a second time with a shower of whizzing bullets.

The Greyfriars juniors ran for their lives.

Crack, crack, crack!

Had the marksman in the plane been given time—even a few more seconds—there was no doubt that he would have succeeded in his object. But the Greyfriars fellows bolted into the house like rabbits into a burrow, the bullets crashing round them as they ran.

The door stood wide open, and the tall figure of Colonel Wharton appeared there as the Greyfriars fellows bolted in.

"Good gad! What—" exclaimed the colonel, in amazement.

Wharton crashed the door shut. A bullet smashed on the outside of the stout oak as it closed.

"Wun Lung! You're hurt!"

The Chinese was rubbing his cheek, and his yellow fingers came away red. But he grinned cheerfully.

"Plenty little scratch?" he answered.

"Plenty small scratches no matter. That pidgin no good."

A bullet had grazed the Chinese's ivory-yellow cheek, barely breaking the skin.

"Thank goodness it's no worse!" gasped Wharton.

"But what—" exclaimed the amazed colonel.

"It's an attack on Wun Lung—from a plane, uncle!" panted Wharton.

"They're firing—"

"Great gad!"

The firing had ceased. It had only

been a matter of seconds. The zoom of the plane died down.

Colonel Wharton strode to a window. The hall was filled with startled members of the household now; even Wells, the butler, had departed a little from his professional calm. Colonel Wharton looked out with a grim brow. The plane was flying low, passing over the park. It crossed the Wimford road, and the wood that lay beyond; and then, as if the airman had changed his mind, it circled back.

Zooooom!

The drone of the engine grew louder again.

"By gad!" said the colonel, between his teeth.

The juniors looked at one another. In the interior of the house they were safe from fire from the plane. Wun Lung had had a narrow escape from his determined enemies, but he had escaped. What was it that the enemy from the air intended now?

The plane was over the lawn again; it flew over the house. There was no firing, only the deep droning boom of the engine. The plane passed out of sight from the windows, flying over the house. From the sound it was evidently not going—it seemed to be circling overhead, like an eagle about to pounce on its prey.

"My only hat!" breathed Bob Cherry. "What—what's their game now? They—they can't mean to come down, and—and—"

Wharton set his teeth.

"I jolly well wish they would! We'd handle the rotters fast enough, if they'd get within reach."

"Yes, rather!" said Johnny Bull.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

The juniors listened to the buzzing of the plane overhead. It seemed as if the enemy was unwilling to leave the spot where his attack had come so near to success but had failed. Yet he could not have hoped that the intended victim would venture from the shelter of the house again so long as the plane was in the offing.

Zooooom!

"I—I—I say, you fellows!" stuttered Bunter. "I say, suppose—suppose—suppose—"

"Suppose what, fathcad?"

"Suppose they drop a bomb!" stuttered the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Turn your supposer off, ass!" said Bob Cherry. "We'd better not suppose anything of the kind."

"Rot!" said Wharton. "It won't come to that! They'd never dare! It's Wun Lung they want, not a whole household, and they're not likely to be fixed for bomb-dropping. Rot!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"They're going," said Nugent.

The zoom of the plane was fading away. For ten minutes, at least, it had circled over the house, flying so low over the old red roofs that it seemed amazing that there had been no accident. But it was going now. Fainter and fainter sounded the roar of the engine.

The juniors stared from the windows. Far in the distance they saw the plane against the sky, climbing.

It vanished at last beyond a mass of fleecy white clouds.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"It's gone!"

"Good gad!" said Colonel Wharton. "Who could have believed it possible? The scoundrels! They shall be called to account for this!"

He went to the telephone.

"Luckily, there's no damage done,"

said Harry Wharton. "Only a few crocks smashed. Nobody hurt!"

"Ow!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're not hurt, Bunter!"

"Ow! Yes! Ow!"

"What the dickens—"

The juniors looked round quickly at Bunter. He had been safe in the house before the firing started.

"How are you hurt?" exclaimed Wharton.

"I've got a bump."

"A bump?" repeated the captain of the Remove.

"Yes. Those beastly Chinese heathens bumped me on the ground out of the hammock—"

"You silly ass!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I've got a bump—"

"I'll give you another to match it if you don't dry up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

The plane was gone. The amazing attack had ended—unsuccessfully. But there were serious faces now among the holiday party at Wharton Lodge.

Far off, in the far land of China, the Mandarin Tang Wang was pulling the strings. Twice his agents had failed; Chu, at Greyfriars, and Fu Long, at Wharton Lodge, had tried and failed, and were in the hands of the police. But it was evident that the mandarin had many agents at his orders, and that they were prepared to carry out his commands to any desperate length.

Wun Chung Lung, the Chinese merchant, had defied the mandarin, far away in the valley of the Yangtse-Kiang. And here, at a distance of many thousands of miles, the power of the mandarin was felt—his vengeance was dogging the footsteps of the merchant's son.

It was to protect Wun Lung from his enemies that Harry Wharton had brought him home for the school holidays. But the captain of the Remove was beginning to doubt now whether the Chinese junior, after all, was safe at Wharton Lodge.

Even Ferrers Locke could hardly guard him against attacks from the air. A man they had never seen, a yellow man in a far-off land, had thrown a shadow over the schoolboy party—the shadow of death.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter—and a Brick!

BILLY BUNTER awoke. He sat up in bed and blinked in the darkness, and groped for the switch of the shaded reading-lamp at the head of the bed and turned it on.

It was past midnight.

The Owl of the Remove, for once, was not sleeping soundly. Generally, Bunter was good for a solid twelve hours, or longer, if he was left alone. But circumstances alter cases.

The attack from the aeroplane had worried Bunter. He was not deeply troubled about the danger of the Chinese junior. The danger of the other fellows did not worry him unduly. But danger to his important and portly self was a serious matter.

That was, in fact, a matter requiring the deepest and gravest consideration.

Bunter's natural idea had been to depart and shake the dust of Wharton Lodge from his fat feet. But there were difficulties in the way.

His pater had tipped him the unusual tip of three pounds, on the clearest possible understanding that he was to

spend the rest of the vacation with his school friends. Mr. Bunter was not likely to display delight if his hopeful son returned suddenly home. He was likely to display something quite different from delight.

Except for those beasts who were after that beast, Wun Lung, and the

He opened the box and groped in it for the cake.

Then a sudden change came over his fat countenance.

"Oh! Beast!" gasped Bunter.

There was no cake in the box! Instead of a cake there was a brick!

Bunter blinked at the brick.

worry on his mind about that beastly aeroplane. His appetite, in fact, had been quite spoiled, and he had eaten hardly enough for three.

He jammed his spectacles on his fat little nose, breathing hard. He took the brick in his hand and crept to the door.



The brick flew from Bunter straight towards Wun Lung's head. But it never reached its billet. Instead, there was a startled gasp from a shadowy figure that was standing by the bedside!

danger that accrued, Bunter was making himself very comfortable at Wharton Lodge. He really did not want to go.

After all, the plane had vanished. The police had taken up the matter; several planes from the air camp were looking for the man who had flown over Wharton Lodge; very likely the beast would never dare to come back and try on the same game again. Indeed, the same game would be futile, for the Chinese junior was now on his guard and unlikely to venture far from shelter. Bunter hoped that it was "all clear," and so he stayed.

But his fat mind was not easy.

He dreamed of war-planes crammed with yellow men, of the banging of rifles, and the grinding of machine-guns; and his slumber was troubled.

He woke at last and sat up in bed and turned on the light. He reached to a little table that stood beside the bed. On the table was a box, and in that box was comfort for the sleepless Owl.

It was Bunter's custom to annex a cake to take up to his room, in case he should get hungry in the night. Seldom, indeed, did he wake to devour the cake—very seldom. But it was nice to scoff it in the morning before breakfast. A cake never came amiss! It was impossible to have too much of a good thing.

Now, sleepless for once, Bunter was glad that he had supplied himself with solid comfort. To sit in bed and eat three pounds of plum-cake was, after all, happiness.

Bricks are very useful articles. They serve many useful purposes. But they are not edible.

"Beast!" hissed Bunter.

His fat face was crimson with wrath. He was hungry—that was Bunter's perpetual state. He could not eat a brick. That was impossible—even for Bunter.

He glared at the brick.

"That heathen beast!" hissed Bunter.

Wun Lung, the Chinese, was as full of tricks as a monkey. From helping Bunter to bump out of a hammock, to replacing his midnight cake with a brick, Wun Lung was capable of anything.

"The awful beast!" gasped Bunter.

He had no doubt that Wun Lung was the culprit. Indeed, he remembered having seen the little Chinese suspiciously near the door of his room at one time during the evening. This was the sort of thing that a benighted heathen considered funny.

Perhaps it was funny, in a way, but, if so, the fun was entirely lost on Billy Bunter.

He sat for several minutes glaring at the incredible brick. He would have been glad to bang that brick on Wun Lung's pigtailed head.

"Beast!"

Bunter crawled out of bed.

He could not sleep—he was too hungry to sleep! Disappointment had made his appetite keener. Supper was hours old; and at supper he had not eaten so much as usual, owing to the

Wun Lung's room was next to Bunter's.

Wun Lung was going to have that brick back! He was going to get it where the chicken got the chopper—which was in the neck. Bunter was not, naturally, vengeful. But there are some wrongs which will stir the most sluggish nature to vengeance; and this was one of them.

Quietly, the fat junior opened his door.

It was very dark in the passage outside. The rooms occupied by the Greyfriars fellows were all on one passage. The passage was dark, a pale glimmer of starlight falling in from a window which looked out over a level, leaded roof.

Bunter tiptoed along the passage. His bare feet made no sound, and darkness enwrapped him like a garment.

If he had not known which was Wun Lung's room, he would have been guided to it by a lingering scent of an aromatic incense. Wun Lung and Hop Hi occupied the same room; and in that room they carried out queer ceremonies that made the Greyfriars fellows smile—privately. They did not, of course, smile openly. Fellows had to respect the customs of foreigners, queer as they might seem. The Chinese juniors attached a solemn importance to the burning of joss-sticks, which was apparently some sort of religious ceremony.

There was always a "niff" of incense-sticks about Wun Lung's room.

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Sometimes the burning of joss-sticks was accompanied by the explosion of crackers. This, the juniors learned, was to scare away evil spirits. At Greyfriars Wun Lung had to conform very considerably to the customs of the country which, in his heart of hearts, like all Chinamen, he regarded as barbarous.

For instance, at Greyfriars, he had to sleep in the dormitory with a crowd of fellows, and putting up a screen there to keep devils out would have been impossible.

But in his own room at Wharton Lodge Wun Lung could do as he liked; and there he took the usual Chinese precautions against devils.

Inside his room, a few feet from the door, a tall screen stood. This kept devils from entering.

Bob Cherry had inquired why the devils couldn't walk round the screen. He had learned that devils always go on straight lines, and never think of turning corners. So, although there was ample room for any fellow to walk round the screen, a devil would never think of doing it. Entering the room with felonious intent, a devil, finding the screen in the way, would retire baffled. Bob had expressed the opinion that Chinese devils must be terrific fat-heads to be beaten so easily as all that.

Wun Lung was a very keen and intelligent boy. Western learning came easily to him. Indeed, a fellow who could learn Chinese might naturally be expected to learn anything.

But the beliefs of his native land remained unchanged, fixed in his mind, immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

In time of trouble, such as the present, Wun Lung confidently looked for help from the spirits of his ancestors,

propitiating those spirits by burning joss-sticks before tablets inscribed with their names. And the screen before his door prevented the good works of those spirits from being marred by the interference of evil spirits.

How any fellow could really believe such stuff was a mystery to his friends; but a fellow's beliefs were entitled to respect, so Harry Wharton & Co. politely kept their own opinion to themselves.

The scent of joss-sticks was stronger than usual as Billy Bunter softly approached the door. No doubt, since the visit from the plane, the Chinese juniors had put up an extra strong appeal to their departed ancestors.

Bunter sniffed.

"Heathen beast!" he murmured.

He reached Wun Lung's door, and turned the handle softly, without a sound. A draught of cold air caught his pyjamaed legs. He blinked round him. The passage window, overlooking a roof, was open. Some of those beasts must have opened it. They liked fresh air; Bunter didn't. However, a draught round his fat legs was not going to stop Bunter when he was on the trail of vengeance.

Silently he pushed the door open.

Three feet from the door stood the devil-screen. It was just an ordinary bed-room screen. The position in which it was placed made it a devil-screen. But if it kept out devils, it was not keeping out Bunter and the brick.

The starlight fell in at the window, and there was light enough for Bunter. He stepped in softly, and paused at the screen for a moment, to listen.

All was still. He could hear the regular breathing of sleepers. He heard, too, a faint sound as of a stealthy movement. He supposed that

one of the Chinese juniors had stirred in his sleep.

But Bunter was cautious. He was going to land that brick on Wun Lung without bagging a punch on his fat nose in return.

Silently he put his head round the side of the screen, to peer towards Wun Lung's bed. The bed was in the shadow, near the wall farthest from the window. But Bunter knew exactly where it was. More than once he had explored Wun Lung's room, in search of the Chinese sweetmeats which Mr. Wun Chung Lung sometimes sent his sons from China.

His fat hand was raised, with the brick in it.

Bunter grinned.

The bed, he knew, was about nine feet away. He calculated carefully. The brick was going to drop on Wun Lung, and certainly it was likely to startle him, and no doubt cause him to regret that he had left it in Bunter's room in place of the cake.

Whizz!

The brick flew.

What happened next made Bunter wonder if he was in the grip of a nightmare. There was a sudden, startled yell, certainly not in the voice of Wun Lung. From the shadows round the bed a figure started. There was a glitter of slanting eyes and the flash of a knife. One hand of the shadowy figure held the knife, the other was pressed to the back of a head where the brick had struck. That head had been in the line of fire, and it had stopped the brick.

Bunter stood dazed.

The figure leaped towards him across the room. He had a glimpse of a wildly startled and ferocious face, slanting eyes that blazed, a knife that flashed in the starlight. With a yell of terror, Bunter bounded back into the passage.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Mystery!

"HELP!"

Bunter's frantic yell rang through Wharton Lodge. Five startled juniors woke instantly and bounded out of bed. But before the Famous Five awoke at Bunter's wild yell, Wun Lung and Hop Hi were out of bed.

Bunter staggered along the passage, shrieking. He was almost out of his fat wits with terror.

Only too well he knew what it meant. It was an enemy of Wun Lung, who was in the Chinese junior's room. It was a terrible deed that Bunter, all unconsciously, had interrupted. How the man had gained admittance was a mystery; but he was there. The brick intended for Wun Lung had struck him, and he was leaping after Bunter like a wild beast. No doubt it did not cross the wretch's mind that he had been interrupted by chance; he supposed himself discovered and attacked.

"Help! I say, you fellows, help!" shrieked Bunter.

He rushed along the passage. Behind him he heard pattering footsteps.

The man was behind him.

"Yaroooh! Keep off! Help!"

Bunter passed his own door, and rushed into Harry Wharton's room. He crashed into the captain of the Remove, who was already out of bed.

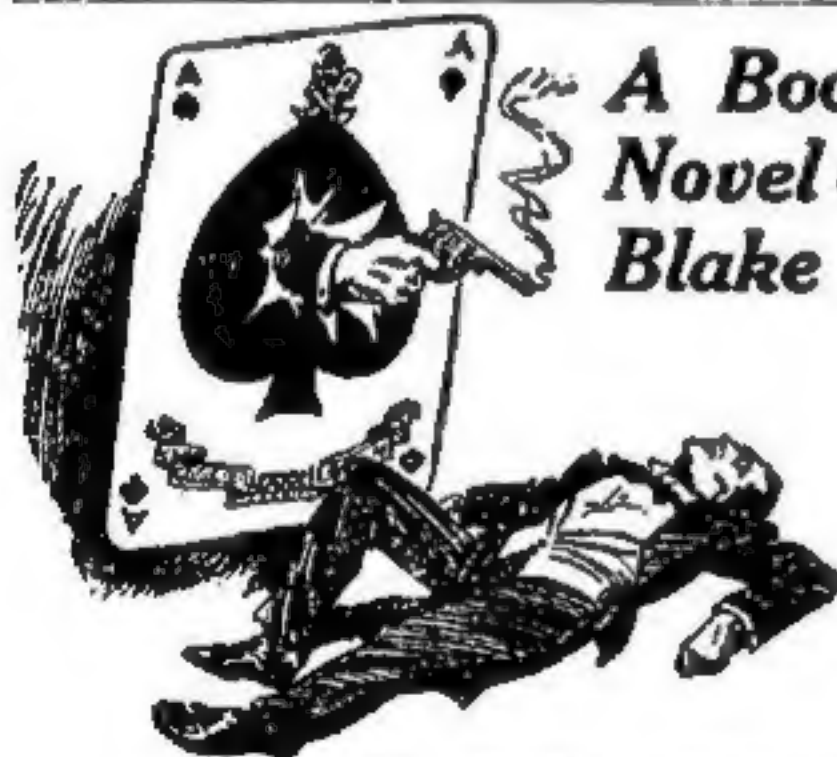
"Owl Oooh! Help!"

"Oh, my hat! What—"

"Help! Murder! Chinaman! Murder! Help!" spluttered Bunter.

"You fat idiot—"

"Yow-ow-ow! Keep him off! Help!" Bunter plunged headlong under



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Wharton's bed and crouched there, palpitating with terror.

Wharton flashed on the light and ran to the door.

Other doors were already open, and Bob Cherry had switched on the light in the passage.

"Great pip!" gasped Wharton.

He had a second's glimpse of a figure vanishing in the distance towards the stairs. The unknown had not been pursuing Bunter, as the fat junior had supposed. He had been running for the staircase.

Wharton glimpsed the figure only for a second; then it was gone. The sound floated back of a man leaping down the dark stairs, two or three at a time.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What the thump—"

"Something's happened—"

"Wun Lung!" gasped Wharton.

He raced along to the Chinese junior's room, his comrades at his heels. The light was on there. Wun Lung and Hop Hi were out of bed. Wun Lung had a curved Chinese knife in his hand; Hop Hi was grasping a poker. Wharton panted with relief as he saw that they were safe.

"You're not hurt?" he gasped.

"Plenty all right," said Wun Lung.

"What's happened?"

"Me no savvy."

"But who—what—someone's been here!" exclaimed Wharton. "I saw somebody cutting away by the stairs." Wun Lung picked up the brick.

"What on earth—"

"Blick!" said the Chinese junior. "Me savvy this blick. Me puttee this blick in fat Bunter's loom, take away cake. But me no savvy how this blick comey this place. Bunter—"

"Let's ask the fat idiot!" said Johnny Bull. "He was up to something, and got frightened in the dark."

"But I saw somebody!" exclaimed Wharton. "Hark!"

There was a crashing sound below. It was the crash of a window. The man Wharton had seen was evidently making his escape by a window downstairs.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Who—"

"What's all this?" It was the deep voice of Colonel Wharton. He appeared in the doorway, in a dressing-gown, with a revolver in his hand. "Harry, what—"

"Somebody's been here, uncle," said Harry. "He ran downstairs, and I think he's got out of a window."

"I thought someone passed me in the dark. But you are safe, Wun Lung?"

"Plenty safe, sir."

"But how was the alarm given?"

"Bunter—Bunter was up to something—"

"Where is he?"

"In my room," said Harry. "Hiding under the bed, I think."

"Come with me," said the colonel. "Keep together—all of you."

He strode away towards Wharton's room, and the juniors followed him in an excited and breathless crowd.

Nobody was to be seen in Wharton's room, but from under the bed came a sound of gasping and spluttering.

"Bunter!" called out Harry.

"Owl! Keep him off! Help!"

"You silly ass! It's all right—come out—we're all here."

"Oh dear!"

A terrified fat face was put out from under the bed, and a large pair of spectacles glimmered in the light.

"I—I say, you fellows—you—you're sure that—that beast is gone? Oh! I say, are you sure—"

"Stand up, you young donkey!" grunted the colonel.

Bunter crawled to his feet. He

blinked uneasily at the open doorway behind the colonel and the group of juniors.

"Now tell me what happened," rapped out the colonel. "Quick!"

"I—I woke up—" gasped Bunter.

"You went to Wun Lung's room?" asked Wharton.

"Owl! Yes! The beast had put a brick here, instead of my cake. I—I went to chuck it at him—oh dear—and—and it hit somebody else—owl! He jumped towards me—wow—and he had a knife—owl! I—I say, you fellows, are you sure he's gone?"

The colonel eyed the fat owl very doubtfully.

"You say you saw someone, Harry?"

"A man running for the stairs," said Wharton. "He was gone in a second. He must have broken a window to get out. We heard—"

"But how could he have got in?" exclaimed the colonel. "Every door—every window is fastened, secured—"

"Owl! The passage window outside is open!" gasped Bunter. "There was a draught—"

The colonel stepped into the passage.

A LAUGH FROM THE EMERALD ISLE!

John Crotty, of 44, Great William O'Brien Street, Cork, Ireland, sends in the following effort and wins a penknife.

Here it is:—

Inspector: "So the prisoner's got away, has he? Did you guard all the entrances?"

County Constable: "Yes, sir; but I think he must have left by one of the exits!"

HA, HA, HA! THAT'S THE STUFF TO GIVE 'EM. NOW HAVE A SHOT AT A JOKE YOURSELF.

Note:—All Jokes and Limericks should be sent to: c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite St., London, E.C.4.

"Surely one of you boys did not open that window!" he exclaimed.

"No! Oh, no!"

"It was open when I passed it," quavered Bunter. "One of you silly asses, with your rotten silly ideas about fresh air—owl!"

"None of us opened that window, uncle," said Harry. "But—but I don't see how it could have been opened from outside. Nobody could get up to the roof—it's impossible. That window only looks over the roofs—nobody could possibly get there from outside!"

"I cannot understand it!" The colonel closed and fastened the window. "It is a mystery how the man got into the house. We must search the place from roof to cellar. Good gad!" He set his lips. "I wish Ferrers Locke was here—but he will be here to-morrow! Come, we must search the house."

"I say, you fellows—"

"You may as well go back to bed, Bunter," said Colonel Wharton curtly.

"You are in no danger."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Come!" said the colonel, to the others.

Billy Bunter bolted back to his room. He looked under the bed, looked in the wardrobe, looked up the chimney, then locked the door, and drew a settee

against it. Then, at last, he rolled into bed, though it was a long time before his eyes closed in slumber.

Meanwhile, the house was searched. A broken window was found on the ground floor. But other trace of the mysterious visitor there was none, and the chums of the Remove could only wonder how he had gained admittance to the house. They returned to bed at last, but there was little more sleep that night for anyone at Wharton Lodge—with the exception of William George Bunter. And Bunter, dreaming of Chinamen and flashing knives, grunted and groaned dismally in his sleep.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Ferrers Locke at Work!

FERRERS LOCKE listened quietly. There was a rather grim expression on the face of the famous detective.

He had received the colonel's telephone call early in the morning, and had come down to the Lodge at once. It was a relief to all to see him. There was something calming, something that inspired confidence in the mere presence of Ferrers Locke.

Colonel Wharton gave him a succinct account of what had happened in the night, and of the aeroplane attack the previous afternoon. Locke listened without interrupting him.

"Wun Lung has had a narrow escape!" said the detective, at last. "It is not too much to say that he owes his life to Bunter's absurd prank. Had not the man been interrupted—"

The colonel shivered a little.

"It is terrible, Mr. Locke! After all the precautions that have been taken—"

"We are dealing with desperate and determined men, sir!" said Locke. "Every precaution has been taken, and yet—"

"Yet the house was entered in the night."

"Quite so! I have, however, questioned the men I left posted to watch the house. They are assured that no one approached the house during the night—or left it," said Locke.

Colonel Wharton opened his eyes.

"The man who entered must, evidently, have approached the house," he said.

"Possibly."

"And as he escaped by breaking a downstairs window, it is equally evident that he must have left it," said the colonel, rather warmly.

"Possibly," repeated the detective.

"Really, Mr. Locke, I don't understand you," said Colonel Wharton, with a touch of testiness in his manner. "The man came—the man is gone! I suppose he did not fly here and fly away?"

Ferrers Locke smiled faintly.

"The former, very likely, the latter, I cannot say," he answered quietly. "I have every confidence in my men—they are old hands at the game. I have faith in their report that no one entered the house by any ordinary approach, and I am certain that, if a fugitive had left it, they would have seized upon him."

"You do not mean to imply that he is still here, Mr. Locke?"

"Why not?" said Ferrers Locke.

"Good gad! You do not imagine that I omitted to search the house, after such an occurrence!" exclaimed Colonel Wharton. "Every servant was roused

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—they and I, my nephew and his friends, searched the place from top to bottom. Every room, every passage, every cellar—"

"I am sure of it! But let us begin at the beginning," said Ferrers Locke tranquilly. "The man broke a downstairs window—to escape, as you conclude—"

"Is there any other conclusion, sir?"

"Yes! His intention might have been to give the impression that he had made his escape that way, but, knowing the house to be strictly guarded by men on the watch outside, he may have refrained from throwing himself into their hands. I do not deny the possibility, sir, that he may have eluded my men—all things are possible—but I do not think so."

Colonel Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Your words imply, sir, that the man is still here, in spite of the rigorous search that was made!" he said, rather gruffly.

"That is what we must ascertain, and without delay," said Ferrers Locke.

The old gentleman gave a faint grunt. He admired the great detective and had great faith in him, but this seemed to Colonel Wharton not only impossible, but verging on the absurd.

"Well, sir, the matter is in your hands," he said. "If the man is still lurking about Wharton Lodge, I shall be glad to see him, very glad."

"Patience, sir!" said Locke. "We shall see! You found nothing else, nothing but the broken window downstairs—"

"Nothing!"

"No window opened—unfastened—"

"A roof window," said the colonel. "But that must have been opened thoughtlessly and left open. It looks out on to a leaded roof, quite inaccessible from the ground."

Ferrers Locke rose to his feet.

"Exactly!" he said. "Let me see that window without delay."

"Certainly! Please come with me."

Locke slid his hand into his pocket to make sure that his automatic was there. Colonel Wharton suppressed a grunt. The mere suggestion that the intruder of the previous night might be still lurking about the Lodge seemed to him fantastic.

"Shall I bring my revolver?" he asked, and as much as he liked Mr. Locke, the old soldier could not keep a note of sarcasm from his voice.

"It would be as well," answered Locke gravely. "In fact, I was about to suggest it, sir."

"Good gad!" said the colonel. However, he took his revolver from a drawer, slipped it into his pocket and left the library with the Baker Street detective.

Harry Wharton & Co. were still in the hall. Locke made the juniors a sign to follow as they went upstairs.

Colonel Wharton led the way to the passage, off which the rooms occupied by the juniors opened.

He stopped at the window, which was now closed and fastened.

Locke did not immediately open it.

He drew the curtain aside, and looked out through the panes.

Outside the little dormer window was a flat, leaded roof, extending about six yards, with a chimney-stack rising in the centre of it.

Lower down were the slanting, tiled roofs of the rest of the building; but the leads were unconnected with them, and on every side the drop was sheer.

"Well, sir?" said Colonel Wharton, rather grimly. "You will see that this section of the roof is quite inaccessible"

to a climber from outside. It can only be reached from inside the house."

"Or from above," said Locke.

"Eh?"

"I think I remember, on a former visit, seeing pigeons gathered on these leads, sir, and your nephew feeding them with crumbs."

Harry Wharton smiled.

"That's so, Mr. Locke," he said. "The pigeons often settle there, and I've often thrown them crumbs from this window."

"There are no pigeons on the roof now," remarked Locke.

"No; I don't see any."

"Perhaps they have a reason for keeping away," said Locke. "I should be very glad to see the other side of that chimney-stack."

"That's easily done," said Colonel Wharton, puzzled. "It is easy to step out of this window on the leads, and look round the stack."

"Quite!" assented Ferrers Locke. "It might not, however, be so easy to return."

"I don't see—"

"Perhaps you will soon, sir," said Locke.

He opened the window, and proceeded to make a careful examination of the outside of the eash. The colonel watched him blankly; the juniors exchanged wondering glances. How the intruder the previous night had entered the house was a mystery, unless he had forced in the window which he had afterwards broken to make his escape. That was strange enough, for if the window had already been forced, there seemed no reason for breaking it to get out. But it seemed the only possible explanation to the minds of the juniors.

But that this dormer window had been opened from outside seemed wildly impossible. A single glance was enough to show that no one could have climbed to the leads.

Yet Locke was evidently looking for signs of the dormer window having been forced from outside.

"What's this game?" murmured Bob Cherry. "The sportsman couldn't possibly have got in this way."

Wharton shook his head.

"Locke knows something," murmured Nugent. "I can jolly well see it in his eye. But I'm blessed if I understand!"

"The understandfulness is not terrific," murmured Harroo Jameet Ram Singh. "But the esteemed Locke is a posterously clever codger."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob.

Locke finished his examination very swiftly, and turned to the colonel.

"The window was forced from outside, sir," he said quietly. "There are perfectly plain traces of the instrument that was used to force the catch. Whoever entered this house last night came in by this window."

"Then you must tell us how he reached that roof, Mr. Locke," said the colonel. "For he could not have reached it without wings."

"He had wings, sir."

"Eh?"

"That is to say, he was borne on wings," said Locke. "When you told me that, after the attack yesterday, the plane circled over the house for a considerable time before departing, you gave me the clue."

"The—the plane!" stuttered the colonel.

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"The plane!" he answered. "The attack on Wun Lung, by firing from the plane, failed! But the rascal had another card up his sleeve. The plane hovered over the house, flying low,

secure from observation, as, of course, everyone was keeping inside the house. Either by means of a parachute, or by sliding down a rope, a man landed from the plane on this roof."

"Good gad!"

"He skulked in the shelter of the chimney-stack till dark," said Locke. "After that he had only to wait in perfect safety till all was quiet. It was child's play to force this window, and no doubt he found it easy enough to pick out Wun Lung's room," Locke smiled. "He had only to follow his nose."

"The—the plane!" stammered the colonel. "Good gad! I—I never thought of that—never dreamed of it. The man must have had a nerve of iron."

"No doubt."

"It seems scarcely possible—"

"Yet it is the fact, for this window has been forced from outside. And as you have remarked yourself, the leads could only be reached on wings. But that," added Ferrers Locke quietly, "is not all. The man is still there."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry.

And every eye was turned blankly on Ferrers Locke.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Man on the Roof!

COLONEL WHARTON tugged at his grizzled moustache, staring at the man from Baker Street as if he could hardly believe his ears.

"Mr. Locke, you are serious?" he stuttered.

"It is not a joking matter, sir."

"But—but—"

"Still there!" gasped Harry Wharton. "There, hiding behind that chimney-stack, Mr. Locke?"

"I have no doubt of it."

"Great pip!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The pipfulness is terrific!"

"But, Mr. Locke!" gasped the colonel. "My nephew saw him running down the stairs. We heard the crash of a window below. The window was found broken; the man was gone!"

"The man, sir, knew quite well that the house was watched outside by men not likely to let him escape," said Locke. "The smashing of the downstairs window was a trick. He did not leave the house."

"But—but the search—"

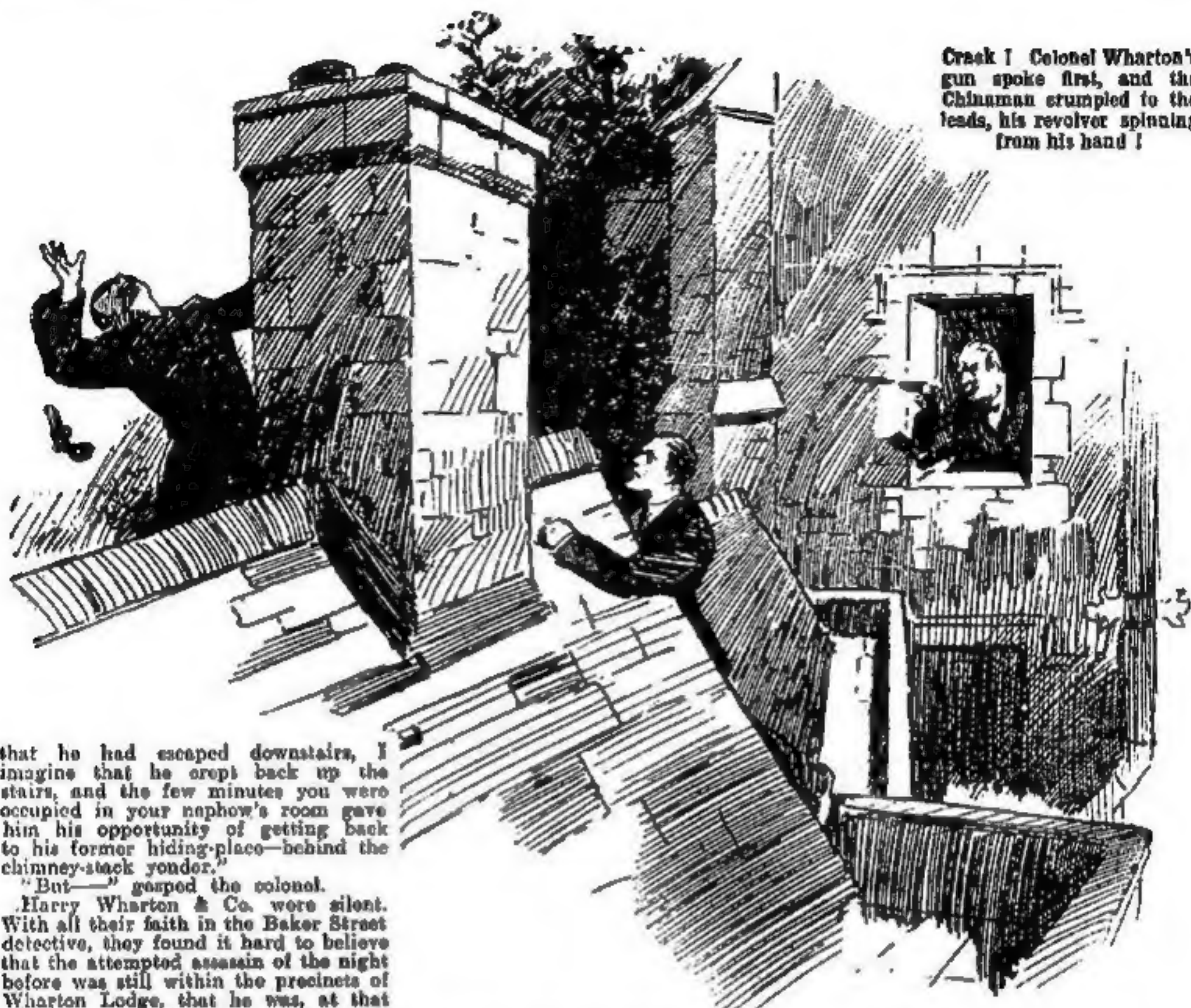
"I should imagine that the search did not begin immediately, sir," said Locke, "for, evidently, according to my theory, the man had time to creep back up the stairs, and get through this dormer window to the roof outside."

"It is true that we went into my nephew's room to question Bunter. The foolish boy was hiding under the bed there."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"But it was only a matter of minutes," said Colonel Wharton. "Then we went down in a body to search the house."

"Quite so. And those minutes were enough for him," said Locke. "Probably his first thought, on being discovered, was simply to get out of reach—to make his escape from instant capture. But he knew—must have known—that escape from the house by way of the grounds was impossible. For there is no doubt that these rascals are well aware of the precautions that have been taken. That is why they used the aeroplane. Having given the impression, by smashing the window,



Crack! Colonel Wharton's gun spoke first, and the Chinaman crumpled to the leads, his revolver spinning from his hand!

that he had escaped downstairs, I imagine that he crept back up the stairs, and the few minutes you were occupied in your nephew's room gave him his opportunity of getting back to his former hiding-place—behind the chimney-stack yonder."

"But—" gasped the colonel.

Harry Wharton & Co. were silent. With all their faith in the Baker Street detective, they found it hard to believe that the attempted assassin of the night before was still within the precincts of Wharton Lodge, that he was, at that very moment, skulking within a few yards of them.

Billy Bunter winked at the other fellows. Bunter, at least, was not convinced. That, indeed, was proved by his remaining on the spot. Had Bunter believed that a murderous enemy was only a few yards away, Bunter's fat legs would have been already in rapid motion at the rate of about sixty m.p.h.

"I say, you fellows, that sounds jolly thick, doesn't it?" said Bunter, in a whisper—a stage whisper.

"Silence, sir!" rapped out Colonel Wharton, with a frown.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Silence! Then it is your opinion, Mr. Locke, that the scoundrel is actually lurking almost within reach of us?"

"I believe so, sir."

"Because your men on the watch saw nothing of his escape?"

"Not only that, sir. You forget the pigeons."

"The—the pigeons," stuttered the colonel.

Locke smiled.

"You have not forgotten that these leads are a favourite haunt of your pigeons. I can see some of them at a distance. Not one has set foot on this roof. They have some reason for keeping clear of their favourite haunt."

"Oh!" gasped the colonel.

Bob Cherry squeezed Wharton's arm.

"Some detective!" he whispered.

"But—but his object, sir—" ejaculated the colonel.

Locke shrugged his shoulders.

"To evade capture, in the first place. Secondly, to wait and watch for a chance to repeat his attempt on the Chinese boy's life."

"Good gad! If you are right, it is fortunate that I remained up and on the watch till dawn."

"Very fortunate."

The colonel stared from the dormer window at the chimney-stack in the middle of the leaded roof.

"After he had done the deed for which he came—but not before—no doubt he would attempt to fight his way out, knife in hand," said Ferrers Locke.

"Not before—for the Mandarin Tang Wang is well served. Had he escaped from the house downstairs last night, he would not have escaped my men, I think. But it is certain, from their report to me, that he did not make the attempt. He is here."

The colonel drew a deep breath.

"Then it only remains—"

"To seize him," said Ferrers Locke.

The detective's automatic was in his hand now, and he leaned from the dormer window over the leads.

Billy Bunter gave him a startled blink through his big spectacles. It dawned upon Bunter that there was, after all, danger in the air.

"Hook it, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The boys had better stand back," said Locke tranquilly. "The man is surely armed, and he may shoot—"

"Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter bolted down the passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're jolly well going to lend a hand, sir, if there's a scrap!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"By all means," he said. "But stand back out of the line of fire. It is very probable that bullets may be flying in at this window soon, and I should not like you boys to stop any of them."

"Stand back," said the colonel.

The juniors reluctantly moved back. Ferrers Locke and Colonel Wharton remained at the window.

Their eyes were fixed on the chimney-stack. If the man was there he was out of sight behind the stack. Was he there? Even yet the colonel could scarcely believe that he was.

"Dje li lai!" called out Ferrers Locke suddenly, sharply.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Nugent.

"What does that mean, Wun Lung? Is he talking Chinese?"

Wun Lung nodded.

"Fellels Locke sayes, comey helc, in Mandarin Chinese!" he said.

"Oh, he's telling the sportsman to come here, is he?"

"What you tinkes?"

Silence followed the detective's call. If there was a man behind the chimney-stack on the leads he made no answer, gave no sign.

"Ni ken lai mo?" called out Ferrers Locke.

"What's that, Wun Lung?" breathed Bob.

"He sayes, 'Will you comey!'"

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Evidently Locke was taking it for granted that Wun Lung's assailant was a Chinaman.

"O yao hwei hsin!" called out Locke.

Again the juniors applied to Wun Lung for translation, and the little Chinese grinned and gave it.

"Locke sayee he wantee answer."

But there came no answer. Not a sound, not a sign, from the man behind the chimney-stack—if he was there. Was he there? The Greyfriars fellows were thrilling with excitement as they waited.

Colonel Wharton had taken his revolver from his pocket, and it rested on the window-sill, firmly gripped in his hand.

"He does not choose to show himself," said Ferrers Locke. "But if the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain."

With his automatic in his hand, the detective put a leg through the little window.

"Mr. Locke, the risk——"

"I shall be careful, sir."

Ferrers Locke stepped out on to the leads. Colonel Wharton leaned from the window, revolver in hand, watching him anxiously.

Then with dramatic suddenness came a movement from the hidden enemy.

From behind the chimney-stack a figure leaped; an ivory-yellow face with glittering, slanting eyes, and lips drawn back in a snarl, was turned towards Ferrers Locke; a yellow hand lifted with a revolver in it.

Crack!

It was Colonel Wharton who fired from the dormer window.

There was a yell and a heavy fall. The Chinaman, struck in the leg by the colonel's swift shot, fell headlong on the leads, the revolver spinning from his hand and rattling away down on the lower roofs.

A couple of seconds and Locke had snapped the handcuffs on the wrists of the wounded man. And Harry Wharton & Co. lent their assistance in lifting him in at the dormer window. The third emissary of Tang Wang was a prisoner.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Sleeping Beauty I

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Lunch was over; the Greyfriars juniors had gathered in the old hall. Billy Bunter reposed his plump limbs in an armchair, with a thoughtful frown on his fat brow.

Wun Lung and Hop Hi played mah-jongg. The Famous Five were standing in a group looking from a window into the sunny park. Ferrers Locke was gone, taking with him the prisoner; and he had left strict injunctions that the Chinese juniors were to remain within the house, and not to venture out of the building on any pretext whatever. And Harry Wharton & Co. had made up their minds to stay indoors also—little as indoors appealed to them on a sunny August afternoon.

Bunter had been thinking over lunch. He had been thinking since. Now he was going to impart to the other fellows the result of his cogitations.

"I say, you fellows," he repeated.

"Oh, go to sleep, old fat man!" said Bob Cherry.

"I've got something to say——"

"You generally have!" granted Johnny Bull.

"The speech may be taken as read!" suggested Nugent.

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"It's you I want to speak to, Wharton, and I shall be obliged if the other fellows will shut up," said Bunter, with dignity. "If you can't give a little attention to a guest, Wharton, I'm rather surprised at your asking me here."

Bob Cherry burst into song.

"Nobody asked you, sir, she said, sir, she said, sir, she said——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you dry up a minute!" hooted Bunter. "Blessed if you fellows aren't like a sheep's head—all jaw! Look here, Wharton——"

"Oh, go ahead!" said Wharton resignedly. "Cut it short, old man."

"I'm here for the rest of the vacation," said Bunter, blinking at him. "That's some weeks yet——"

"Alas!" said Bob Cherry.

"The alasfulness is terrific."

"Shut up! But if this goes on," continued Bunter, "I shall have to reconsider the matter, Wharton. You can hardly expect me to remain in a house where burglars and rabid Chinamen break in at night, and fire from aeroplanes, and so on. It's not good enough. Naturally, I never expected anything of the sort when I came here. It's not what I call a holiday."

"Finished?" asked Bob.

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Oh dear! Couldn't you go up to your own room and say the rest?"

"Boast! Now, I'm not thinking of letting you down, Wharton," went on Bunter. "I can't say I like the manners of your friends; but I'm a man of my word—I said I'd stay, and I'm sticking to you."

"I was afraid so," assented Wharton. "But if you'd rather clear, old chap, I've got no objection."

Bunter decided not to bear that remark.

"But you can't call this a holiday, with all these things happening," he said. "It's not good enough. I can't lose my sleep and my appetite and all that. There's been quite enough of all this. It's time it stopped."

"Well!" asked Wharton.

"Those Chinese boasts are after Wun Lung," said Bunter. "Well, if Wun Lung cleared off, they'd clear off, too. My suggestion is that Wun Lung should clear."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm not the fellow to care about danger, as you know! I saved Wun Lung's life last night. While you fellows were snoring, I rushed to the rescue, and saved him——"

"Phew!"

"But I've had enough," said Bunter. "A fellow wants a little peace and quiet on a holiday. Wun Lung had better go."

Wun Lung looked up from his mah-jongg.

"I put it to you, Wun Lung," said Bunter. "You can see for yourself it won't do! You're a nuisance, and you'd better clear. What I say is this——Yaroooooooooop!"

From the group of juniors at the window an apple suddenly flew. It landed on Billy Bunter's fat little nose, and caused him to break off his remarks with a sudden yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well howled!"

"Ow! Oh! Wow!" roared Bunter. "What beast chucked that apple? I'll jolly well lick him! Ow! Was it you, Cherry, you beast?"

"Guilty, my lord!"

"Look here, you cheeky rotter——"

"I've got another apple in my pocket," said Bob cheerfully. "You've

only got to go on wagging your silly chin, if you want it."

"Look here, Wharton! If this is the way you allow a guest to be treated, I——"

"Oh, cheer it!" said Harry.

"What I want to know is this," hooted Bunter. "Is that heathen Chinese going?"

"No, fathead!"

"Then I shall jolly well go!"

"Hurrah!"

The Famous Five walked out on the terrace. Billy Bunter glared after them, with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"Fatter ole Bunter velly funnee!" said Wun Lung.

"Velly funnee ole fat loadee!" grinned Hop Hi.

Bunter snorted, and settled down in the armchair for a nap. The state of affairs at Wharton Lodge troubled Bunter's fat mind deeply. As he had justly remarked, this could hardly be called a holiday, with danger in the air all the time. If that danger should reach Bunter's own fat person, matters would become really serious.

On the other hand, Bunter would have been quite easy in his fat mind if the Chinese juniors had left the Lodge, drawing the pursuit of Tang Wang's emissaries in another direction. Any direction would do, so long as it was not Bunter's direction. But, for some reason inexplicable to Bunter, the other fellows did not seem to see it. Still, there was comfort in sleep after a gargantuan lunch, and Bunter closed his eyes behind his big spectacles and snored.

Wells came into the hall and glanced round him.

There was a sound like the rumbling of thunder, and the butler seemed puzzled.

He went to the window and looked out; but the summer sky was bright and clear. There was no sign of a coming thunderstorm. He looked round the hall again. Wun Lung chuckled.

"Only Bunter sleepoo!" he said.

"Oh!" said Wells.

He walked round Bunter's chair and looked at him. The rumbling proceeded from Bunter. Wells looked down at the sleeping beauty somewhat expressively. Bunter lay back in the chair, his fat little legs stretched out, his hands folded across the widest part of his circumference—his equator, as it were—his mouth open. His aspect was not really pleasing to the eye. Neither was his snore harmonious to the ear.

Wells touched him on the shoulder.

Snore!

Wells shook him.

Snore!

Wells shook him again. Bunter's eyes opened at last.

"Beast! Wharrer want?"

"Excuse me, sir——"

"Gr-r-r-r! Shurrup!"

"I thought perhaps you would prefer to go to your room, sir," suggested Wells. "You would perhaps find your bed more comfortable, sir."

Bunter glared at him.

"Go and eat coke! I'll ask the colonel to sack you! Get out!"

"Really, sir——"

Snore!

Bunter was asleep again.

Wells, with a still more expressive look on his face, retired from the scene, and Bunter was left to snore. That deep and resonant snore echoed through the old oak hall of Wharton Lodge. It awoke many echoes. Colonel Wharton, who was smoking a cigar in the library, put his head out of the door, and

(Continued on page 12.)

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First of all solve this Fourth Set of puzzles, which, as before represent the names of six cricketers you know very well. You will remember that to find out what each name is, you simply take the initial letter only of the word represented by each little picture, add in the big letters where they are given you—and there is the answer. The answer to every one of this week's puzzles can be found in the short list below.

Write your answers **IN INK** in the spaces provided beneath the puzzles, then sign your name and address, also in ink, on the coupon attached to this week's set, and cut out the whole tablet. Next gather together the three previous puzzle sets, see that all the solutions are filled in, and pin all four together in order, so as to form one complete entry.

Place the entry in a properly stamped envelope and post it early to:

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HERE



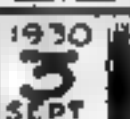

ASHDOWN, BATES, BELL, BRAY, CLAY, COX, CROUCH, DAVIES, ELLIOT, FAIRFAX, FENDER, FENLEY, FOX, GIBBONS, GILLIGAN, GODDARD, HALLOWS, HAMMOND, HARDINGE, HERMAN, HOPWOOD, LIDDELL, MERCER, MORGAN, OLDFIELD, PASMORE, PERKS, PONSFORD, POPE, RICHARDS, ROOT, RYAN, SHEPHERD, SIDWELL, SUTCLIFFE, TURNBULL.



The Two Cricket Bats, fully autographed by the Australian Team now in England will be awarded to the two competitors whose solutions to the four sets of "Cricket Scorers" are correct or most nearly correct. The twelve special "Hornby Train" Sets will follow in order of merit.





Any number of entries may be sent, but each entry must be complete—i.e., Sets Nos. 1-4, inclusive, of the "Cricket Scorers" puzzles, with the solutions filled in **IN INK**—and must be separate from any


"CRICKET SCORERS" SET 4





19.   **N**   **O**  **D**

20.  **I**  **3**  **E**  **L**

21.   **A** **52** **WEEKS**

22.  **E**   **E** 

23.  **ATLANTIC** **PACIFIC** **INDIAN** **X**

24.   **R**   **N**

In entering this contest, I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final and legally binding.

Signed.....

Address.....

MAGNET.

RULES

(which must be strictly adhered to).

other attempts entered. Any entries mutilated or bearing alterations or more than one solution in each space will be disqualified. No responsibility can be undertaken for entries lost, or mislaid, or delayed in the post, or otherwise. No correspondence can be entered into.

The Editor's decision will be final and legally binding, and he reserves the right to divide the value of the prizes if necessary in the event of ties.

Employees of the proprietors of MAGNET must not compete.

THE FOE FROM THE SKY!

(Continued from page 10.)

looked round with a puzzled expression. Then, catching sight of the sleeping beauty, he gave a grunt, and withdrew.

Bunter snored on, while the Famous Five strolled on the terrace, and Wun Lung and Hop Hi played mah-jongg to the accompaniment of that incessant rumble.

Miss Wharton came across the hall, paused, and glanced round. She looked at Bunter.

"Dear me!" said Miss Wharton.

And she passed on.

"Bunter sleeps plenty sounder!" murmured Wun Lung, with a grin to his minor. "Bunter no wakee, s'pose touchee. You fetchee colour boxes from my loom, what you tinkee?"

Hop Hi chuckled softly, and disappeared up the stairs. He came back in a few minutes with two colour boxes.

Wun Lung glanced round him cautiously. The two Chinese juniors and Bunter had the hall to themselves. Mischievous dancing in the slanting eyes of Wun Lung of the Remove.

He approached Bunter cautiously. But caution was not really needed. Bunter was not easy to wake.

The Chinese juniors squeezed colour from the tubes, and proceeded to work. Hop Hi followed suit. They worked swiftly and deftly.

Bunter's fat little nose was painted a bright crimson, with a black spot on the tip. His pudgy cheeks were barred with black and yellow. His mouth—which was rather wide to begin with—was extended from ear to ear with skilful strokes of red. Green circles, with yellow centres, adorned his forehead, and his chin was painted blue. During the painting, Bunter snored on, with shut eyes and open mouth. By the time the two Chinese juniors had finished Bunter's aspect was really remarkable.

He showed no sign of waking, and Wun Lung painted his fat ears a dark purple. Then he proceeded to work Chinese white into Bunter's hair.

The fat junior stirred and grunted. But he did not wake. He snored on, and Wun Lung's and Hop Hi's gentle hands proceeded with their work. In a short time Bunter's hair was completely white. Like the Prisoner of Chillon, his hair was grey but not with years, nor grow it white in a single night, as men's have grown from sudden fears. It grew perfectly white in ten minutes under the manipulation of Wun Lung.

"Oh clumba!" gasped Hop Hi.

Wun Lung chuckled silently.

"Velly Pletty," he said.

And the two Chinese juniors retired from the scene, taking their mah-jongg to their own room, and leaving Bunter to snore.

Peacefully, if not quietly, Bunter slept on.

He slid lower down in the chair. Presently his fat chin dropped on his chest. He snored and gurgled a little. He smiled in his sleep. In a happy dream, he was eating his lunch over again.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

BILLY BUNTER ceased to snore at last.

His eyes opened behind his big spectacles.

He yawned.

He had had a long nap. He had had a pleasant nap. Now he was awake.

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again, and his first thought was to wonder how long it was to tea-time.

He sat up in his chair, and yawned.

"Yaw-aw-aw-aw!"

John, the footman, had come into the hall from the servants' door, with a quiet step. He glanced round as he heard a loud and prolonged yawn.

Bunter rose from the chair and blinked at him.

"I say, where are the fellows?" asked Bunter.

Now that he was awake, Bunter did not want to be alone. Bunter was a gregarious fellow. He had finished sleeping, and it was not yet time to eat again, so the interval could be filled in agreeably by talking. He was, in fact, rather annoyed to find himself alone. It was just like those beasts to sneak off quietly and leave a fellow on his own.

John did not answer his question. He gave a sudden, convulsive start, as Bunter rose from the deep chair and dawned on him.

The late startling occurrences at the Lodge had, perhaps, made John a little nervous. But if John had possessed a nerve of iron, he might well have been startled now.

He gazed at Bunter speechless.

He did not, of course, recognise him. Bunter's nearest and dearest relative could not have recognised him now. He did not resemble William George Bunter in the very least. Judged by the colour of his hair, he looked about seventy. Judged by his barred yellow and black cheeks, he looked like a zebra. The rest of his countenance was equally unnering. John gazed at him, his jaw dropping.

Bunter blinked at John in surprise and annoyance. He could not understand why the fellow did not answer.

"Deaf!" he snorted.

"Ooooooh!" gasped John.

Bunter made a step towards him. That did it! The petrified John woke suddenly to life! With a startled howl he turned and bolted through the door by which he had entered, and slammed it after him. Who Bunter was—what he was—John did not know and could not guess. But he knew that he wanted to get away from whatever it was.

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Bunter.

He was quite astonished.

Why a footman should bolt in dire terror at the sight of him, was a mystery to Bunter.

"The silly ass!" grunted Bunter. "Potty, I suppose. Precious sort of place to ask a fellow, with mad servants about!"

Bunter turned in the direction of the drawing-room, where he hoped to find somebody. Miss Wharton was most likely there; and Miss Wharton was the most patient person at the Lodge, under the infliction of Bunter's company. The Owl of the Remove opened the door and rolled in.

Miss Wharton was there. The old lady was sitting by a sunny open window. She was giving some instructions to Mary, the parlourmaid. Her back was towards Bunter; but Mary, standing before the mistress of Wharton Lodge, saw the fat junior at once when he entered.

Mary gave a shriek.

Her eyes distended at the sight of Bunter, as if they would start out of her head.

Bunter blinked at her.

"I say—" he began.

Shriek!

"Look here—"

Shriek!

"Dear me!" said Miss Wharton,

startled. "What is the matter, Mary! Dear me! What—what ever—"

Shriek!

Bunter came across towards the window, more and more astonished. John had fled at the sight of him. Now Mary was shrieking, apparently on the verge of hysterics. Bunter had always believed that he had a rather striking countenance—that his features were worth a second glance. But he had never dreamed of his aspect producing an effect like this.

Shriek, shriek, shriek!

As Bunter advanced, Mary retreated. Her shrieks rang through the room. As Bunter came closer, Mary recovered the use of her paralysed limbs, dodged round the piano, and fled for the door.

"I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

Mary fled from the room, still shrieking.

"Mad!" gasped Bunter, in amazement. "That's the second blessed lunatic! Have they all gone mad while I've been asleep? I say, Miss Wharton—"

Miss Amy Wharton had sat still, utterly astonished by Mary's amazing and unaccountable conduct. But as Billy Bunter dawned on her, she understood the cause of Mary's terror—and shared it. She was an old lady, accustomed to slow and stately motion. But as she saw Bunter, she jumped out of her chair with all the activity of a youthful flapper.

"Oh!" she gasped. "Oh! Help!"

"I—I say—"

"Go away!" shrieked Miss Wharton. "Away! Help! Help! James—Harry—help!"

"Oh crikey! Are you mad, too?" gasped Bunter.

Miss Wharton staggered away from him. She leaned from the open window, which looked over the terrace. The Famous Five were still sauntering there, not caring to go farther afield, as they felt it their duty to keep within touch of the Chinese junior.

They stared round, and ran towards the window, as Miss Wharton leaned out, shrieking for help.

"Auntie—what?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Help!"

The window was rather high above the terrace, but Wharton made a run, and a desperate leap, and caught the sill with his hands. He scrambled in breathlessly.

"What?" he gasped.

"Take care, Harry! Oh, help! Take care! That dreadful man—"

"Who—what?"

Wharton glared round, and jumped at the sight of a hideous face, with black and yellow cheeks, blue chin, red mouth from ear to ear, and white hair. Miss Wharton sank stuttering into a chair. Harry Wharton made a leap towards the horrible-looking intruder.

Who he was, what he was, Wharton had no idea, but he went for him with a rush. There was a crash as Bunter went down, with the captain of the Remove over him.

"Back up, you men!" yelled Wharton.

Bob Cherry, bunched up from below, scrambled in. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh followed him. Johnny Bull and Nugent ran for the nearest door.

"Yow-ow-ow—groooh—oooooh!" came from the fat junior, struggling under the captain of the Remove.

Bob and Hurree Singh were grasping him in a moment. Bunter, wondering wildly whether he was still asleep, in the grip of the worst nightmare he had ever had, struggled and squirmed frantically and gurgled horribly.

"Got him!" panted Bob Cherry.
 "The gotfulness is terrific."
 "Who—who is it?"
 "Goodness knows! Keep him safe!"
 "You bet!"
 "Grooooooh!"

Johnny Bull and Nugent came racing in at the door. A moment later, Colonel Wharton appeared. Behind him came Walls, and several startled servants.

"What is it?" exclaimed the colonel.
 "Oh dear!" gasped Miss Wharton.
 "A dreadful man—a dreadful-looking savage—Oh dear! Oh!"

"Calm yourself, my dear," said the colonel. "We have him safe! He is a prisoner! How could the scoundrel have gained admittance?"

"Grooooooh!"
 "Hold him fast, my boys, and let me look at him!"
 "Ooooooh!"

The dreadful apparition was dragged to his feet. He stood gasping and spluttering in the grasp of the juniors, and the colonel looked at him, his eyes wide open, with amazement.

"Good gad! Who—what—he appears to be in some sort of disguise! What—what—you rascal, who are you?"

"Grooooooh!"
 "Answer me!" roared the colonel.
 "Oooooooch!"
 "How did you get here?"

"G-r-r-r!"
 Bunter struggled for breath. His fat brain was swimming. Of all the surprised crowd, no one was so astonished as Bunter. Unless every occupant of Wharton Lodge had gone mad while he was having his nap, Bunter simply couldn't understand what it all meant.

"Keep him secure! Now, you rascal!"
 "Oh dear! Grooooooh! I—I—I say, you fellows!"
 Then there was a howl.
 "Bunter!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Very Pretty!

"I—I—I say, you fellows! Leggo! What's the matter?" gasped Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co.'s hands dropped from the fat junior, in sheer astonishment.

They stared at him.
 "Bunter!" said Miss Wharton faintly.
 "But—but how can that be Bunter? Oh dear! Are—are you sure it is Bunter?"

"Oh, really, ma'am—"
 "Is that fat idiot potty?" gasped Bob Cherry. "Is—is—he raving, raging potty?"

"The pottiffulness must be preposterous!" ejaculated Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh.

Colonel Wharton strode towards the fat junior, and dropped a heavy hand

on his shoulder. He frowned portentously at the amazed Owl.

"Is this what you are pleased to call a joke, Bunter?" he demanded. "You have frightened my sister—"

"Oh, really, sir—"
 "You have frightened the servants—"

"Eh! How have I frightened anybody?" gasped Bunter.

"Your face!" snapped the colonel. "Did you not expect to cause alarm, with a face like that?"

Bunter glared at him.
 Often enough, in the Greyfriars

"I know you're jealous of my good looks; but there's a limit. I think—"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry. "His good looks! You crass ass, what have you got up like that for?"

"Why shouldn't I get up?" demanded Bunter.

"But why have you done it?" almost shouted Colonel Wharton.

Bunter felt as if his head was turning round with astonishment.

"Because I woke up," he answered.

"Eh!"
 "What?"
 "Naturally I got up when I woke

While Billy Bunter slept, his features were deftly adorned with the most brilliant colours from the Chinese juniors' colour boxes!



Remove, Bunter had heard personal remarks about his face. Bunter was convinced that his face was a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. Other fellows in the Remove held a quite contrary opinion, and made no secret of it.

But never had Bunter heard anything so personal as this! To be told that his face had frightened Miss Wharton, and frightened the servants, was really too much; Bunter being still blissfully unconscious that his face was decorated in a highly coloured variety of Chinese art.

He fairly snorted with indignation.
 "My face?" he gasped.

"Yes, sir!" booted the colonel.
 "Your face!"

"You let my face alone," said Bunter warmly. "What about your own, if you come to that?"

"What?"
 "Mine's a jolly sight better-looking than yours, and chance it!" said Bunter hotly. "Talk about my face frightening people! Well, yours would crack a looking glass!"

"Good gad! I—" the colonel stammered.

"You silly owl!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "What do you mean by going about with a face like that?"

"You cheeky ass!" booted Bunter.

up," said Bunter. "Why shouldn't I? Have all you fellows gone potty, or what?"

"You fat dummy!" booted Bob. "I mean, what have you got your chivvy up like that for? Do you think it's pretty?"

"The prettiness is not terrific."

"The boy must be insane," said Colonel Wharton. "He must be hopelessly insane. He must be taken care of. Do not be alarmed, Amy; every care will be taken of this unfortunate boy. I will telephone for a doctor to see him."

Bunter jumped.

"Eh! I don't want to see a doctor!" he ejaculated. "What are you driving at? I can't make out what you're all up to. Making out that I frighten people, and then talking about calling in a doctor! Collaring a fellow and bumping him on the floor! If that's what you call manners—"

"What did you do it for?" shrieked Nugent.

"Eh! What have I done?" gasped Bunter. "What do you mean? I haven't done anything, have I?"

"Your face—"

"Let my face alone!" roared Bunter.

(Continued on page 15.)

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THE FOE FROM THE SKY!

(Continued from page 13.)

"Blessed if I was ever so insulted in my life! If I had a face like yours I'd wear a Guy Fawkes mask over it. It's pretty sickening that a fellow can't be good-looking without all this miserable jealousy."

"What have you painted your face for?" yelled Wharton.

Bunter jumped again.

"Pip-pip painted it?" he stammered. "Who's painted his face? What are you getting at, you dummy?"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob. "Is—is it possible that he doesn't know it? Has somebody been japing him while he was asleep?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

They understood now. Bunter, evidently, was unaware of the remarkable aspect of his fat countenance.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, what's this game? What are you sniggering at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh gad!" gasped Colonel Wharton, realising the truth at last. "Oh gad! Someone has been playing tricks on the boy. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" boomed the colonel.

Bunter's blissful unconsciousness of his striking appearance seemed to take the old gentleman by storm.

Bunter blinked from one to another in angry amazement.

"What are you all sniggering at?" he yelled. "I say, Miss Wharton, you tell me what's the matter, will you?"

"Oh dear!" gasped Miss Wharton. "Oh dear! Ha, ha! Oh dear! My dear boy, look at your face in the glass! Oh dear!"

Bunter stared at her, and then rushed to the nearest looking-glass. He realised, by this time, that something was amiss with his face.

He blinked into the glass.

Then he jumped clear of the floor, with a yell.

"Oh crikey!"

The face that looked back at Bunter from the glass startled him. He could hardly believe that it was his own. Often and often had Bunter gazed in a mirror with admiration. But he could not admire the visage that stared back at him now.

His eyes almost bolted out through his spectacles as he blinked at a face decorated with almost all the colours of the rainbow, surmounted by a shock of perfectly white hair.

"Oh crikey! Oh jiminy! I—I—I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Wells was laughing. Even John and Mary were giggling. Bunter was not exciting terror now. He was exciting irresistible merriment. He gazed at the dreadful vision in the glass like a fellow in a dream.

"Mum-mum-my face—" gasped Bunter. "Wha-a-at's the matter with my face? Wha-a-at's happened to it? Oh crikey! I say you fellows, my hair's turned white—white as snow—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter turned from the glass and stared at the hilarious spectators. There was a fresh yell of laughter. A full view of the decorated fat countenance was irresistible.

"But—but who did it?" gasped Bob. "Somebody must have painted him while he was asleep—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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A little grinning yellow face was put round the open door. Wun Lung's slanting eyes glimmered at Bunter.

"Mo tinkes Bunter velly pretty!" he said.

"Was it you?" roared Bob.

"What you tinkes?" chuckled Wun Lung. "Bunter so velly ugly, mo tinkes painted faces, makes velly pretty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young rascal!" exclaimed the colonel. "You—ha, ha!—Bunter, you had better go and—ha, ha!—wash yourself! Ha, ha, ha!"

"The washfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter," chuckled Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That beastly heathen—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter velly pretty!" chuckled Wun Lung. "Bunter ugly faces become velly pretty now! What you tinkes?"

"I—I—I'll—" gasped Bunter.

He made a furious rush at the little Chinese. Wun Lung promptly vanished. After him flew Bunter, in a state of raging wrath. And a roar of laughter followed Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Bunter!

"WELLS!"

"Sir!"

"Where are those beasts?"

Wells coughed.

Perhaps he did not recognise his master's nephew and his friends under that description.

"Really, sir," said Wells.

"Gone out?" snorted Bunter.

It was morning; two or three days later. Bunter had come down at eleven o'clock. He had breakfasted late, in bed, and enjoyed a little nap after breakfast. Now he was ready to begin the day, and he seemed to take it as a matter of course that everybody else was ready to begin at the same time. If the beasts insisted on waking him, Bunter was indignant; if they went out without him he was equally indignant. The only way to please Bunter was to sit down quietly and wait till he was pleased to stir. But the Famous Five, somehow, did not seem to devote their whole thoughts to pleasing Bunter. They ought to have done so, of course, but they didn't.

Bunter blinked morosely at Wells, whom he had found in the hall. Wells was quite respectful in his manner, yet Bunter had an impression somehow that Wells did not really regard him with the respect that was his due.

"Have the brutes gone out?" demanded Bunter.

"The what, sir?" asked Wells respectfully.

"The beasts," explained Bunter.

"I have not seen any beast go out, sir," said Wells. "There are, I believe, no animals about the place."

"You jolly well know what I mean," snorted Bunter. "Has Wharton gone out, blow you?"

"Master Harry has gone out!"

"Where are the other rotters?"

"I am afraid I am unacquainted with the movements of any persons to whom such a description is applicable, sir," said Wells.

Bunter breathed hard through his fat little nose. He was annoyed, and Wells could see that he was annoyed. Therefore, Wells ought to have been in a state of fear and trembling, as became a menial when Bunter was annoyed.

Instead of which Wells was calm and urbane, apparently ignorant of Bunter's annoyance, and even respectfully sarcastic.

"Have Wharton's friends gone with him?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"And those rotten heathens—I mean Wun Lung and Hop Hi!" snorted Bunter, as he saw that Wells was just going to disclaim any knowledge of rotten heathens.

"They have gone also, sir."

"And the old jossar?"

"I am unacquainted with any old jossar, sir," said Wells.

"I mean Colonel Wharton!" booted Bunter.

"If you mean Colonel Wharton, sir, the master has also gone out," said Wells urbanely. "Would you mind, sir, alluding to the master in a more respectful manner? Otherwise, sir, I fear that it will not be consistent with my duty to hear your remarks, sir."

Bunter snorted. This blessed menial was actually venturing to give him a lesson! He gave Wells a withering look, but the sedate butler of Wharton Lodge did not appear withered thereby.

"Well, I call it rotten!" growled Bunter. "The whole blessed lot of them gone out without waiting for me to come down! Rotten! Well, look here, Wells, I think I'll have the car out."

"They have gone in the car, sir."

"Well, if that isn't thick!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "I really think they ought to know better than that, Wells."

"I think, sir, that Master Wun Lung will be quite safe," said Wells, misunderstanding Bunter—perhaps unintentionally.

"Eh?"

"The master considered that the Chinese gentlemen should take the air, sir," explained Wells. "They have been very much confined to the house of late, sir, owing to the unusual circumstances. But in the car, and with their friends, no doubt they will be safe. I think you need not worry unduly about them, sir."

Bunter stared at him. If Wells thought he was worrying unduly, or worrying at all, about anybody but W. G. Bunter, Wells was a bigger fool than Bunter took him for.

"Who the thump cares about the beastly little heathens?" snapped Bunter. "Don't be a silly ass, Wells. Any letters for me?"

"I think not, sir."

"I'm expecting a postal order," grunted Bunter.

"Indeed, sir."

Bunter blinked at him. Possibly he was thinking of extracting from Wells an advance on that expected postal order, which, like so many of Billy Bunter's expected postal orders, had not arrived. Possibly Wells read the thought in his mind, for he glided away with his noiseless step and vanished.

Bunter grunted discontentedly.

He rolled over to a table in the hall, where a number of letters and a parcel lay. Apparently the party had gone out early, for they had missed the second delivery of letters in the morning. Bunter blinked over the letters, but there was none addressed to himself. He blinked at the parcel. It was addressed to Wun Lung.

Bunter turned that parcel over in his fat hands.

Wun Lung sometimes received packets of sweetmeats and Chinese delicacies from his native land. But this parcel had evidently not come from China, for

a label attached to it intimated that it was dispatched from a well-known store in London, and the postmark was London.

Bunter's fat fingers lingered on the parcel.

He was wondering whether it contained anything eatable—perhaps some of the sticky sweetmeats in which the Chinese junior delighted.

He blinked round him.

He was alone in the hall.

He who hesitates is lost! Bunter picked up the parcel, slid it under his arm, and rolled away.

If there was anything eatable in that parcel, especially if it was sticky sweets, Bunter was going to eat it! That, he felt, was only fair. Wun Lung had never been punished for painting the sleeping beauty, and Bunter felt that this would be a suitable and well-deserved punishment. He also felt that he would like the sweets, which was a still more important consideration.

But he realised that he had better not let Wells, or John, or anybody else, see him with the parcel. It was very likely to be inquired after, in which case it would be necessary for Bunter to plead complete ignorance of it—which he could hardly do if he had been seen walking it off.

So Bunter was very wary.

He picked up a light coat belonging to Wharton and threw it over his arm. Then he rolled out on the terrace.

The terrace, however, was overlooked by many windows. Bunter did not stop there. He rolled down the steps from the terrace and headed for the bathing-pool in the wood. The pool was at a good distance from the house, and it was shut in by oaks and beeches. So

it was exactly the secluded spot that Bunter wanted.

Everybody but Bunter being out, he found the bathing-pool quite deserted. He sat down on a bench beside the pool, sorted out his penknife, and cut the string of the parcel.

When the wrapping-paper was unrolled and pitched into the pool to get rid of it, a box was revealed.

Bunter blinked at the box.

He had hoped that it would prove a box of chocolates, or Turkish delight, or something else of a sweet and sticky nature.

Instead of which it proved, when the last wrapping had been taken off, to be a wooden box, with the words "MAH JONGG" inscribed on the lid.

Bunter gave a snort of utter disgust and threw it on the bench.

Bunter had seen Wun Lung and Hop Hi playing mah-jongg—a Chinese game that was mysterious and utterly uninteresting, to Bunter. He did not know how to play it, did not want to know how to play it, and took not the slightest interest in it. And the box, which he had abstracted so surreptitiously from the hall, was apparently nothing more or less than a new mah-jongg set! It was no wonder that Bunter was disgusted.

Very likely there would be a row about it. Wells was sure to mention that there had been a parcel for Wun Lung—Wells was that kind of a beast. Wun Lung was sure to want to know what had become of his parcel—Wun Lung was that kind of a beast. Colonel Wharton was certain to inquire very strictly after a parcel that had vanished from the hall table—the colonel was that kind of a beast! Harry Wharton

& Co. were more likely than not to suspect Bunter of having begged it—they were that kind of beasts! In a beastly world, surrounded as it were by beasts, Bunter had often found trouble—and now he looked like finding it again—for nothing.

That was the unkindest cut of all! Mah-jongg was not eatable, and it was, therefore, utterly valueless and useless to Bunter. He had taken all this trouble and risk for absolutely nothing!

"Br-r-r-r!" grunted Bunter.

There was nothing for Bunter to eat! And it was impossible to replace the parcel on the hall table without revealing that it had been tampered with! And Wun Lung was a cheeky boathen, who richly merited punishment for having painted Bunter's face while he slept! So it was clear that there was only one thing to do with that mah-jongg box!

Bunter picked it up from the bench and slung it into the pool.

Splash!

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bunter.

It suddenly occurred to his fat mind that the box, being of wood and a mah-jongg set very light in weight, might float! In which case it would remain in evidence against him! It was not Bunter's way to foresee anything; and he did not think of this till the box had splashed into the pool.

To his great relief, it sank.

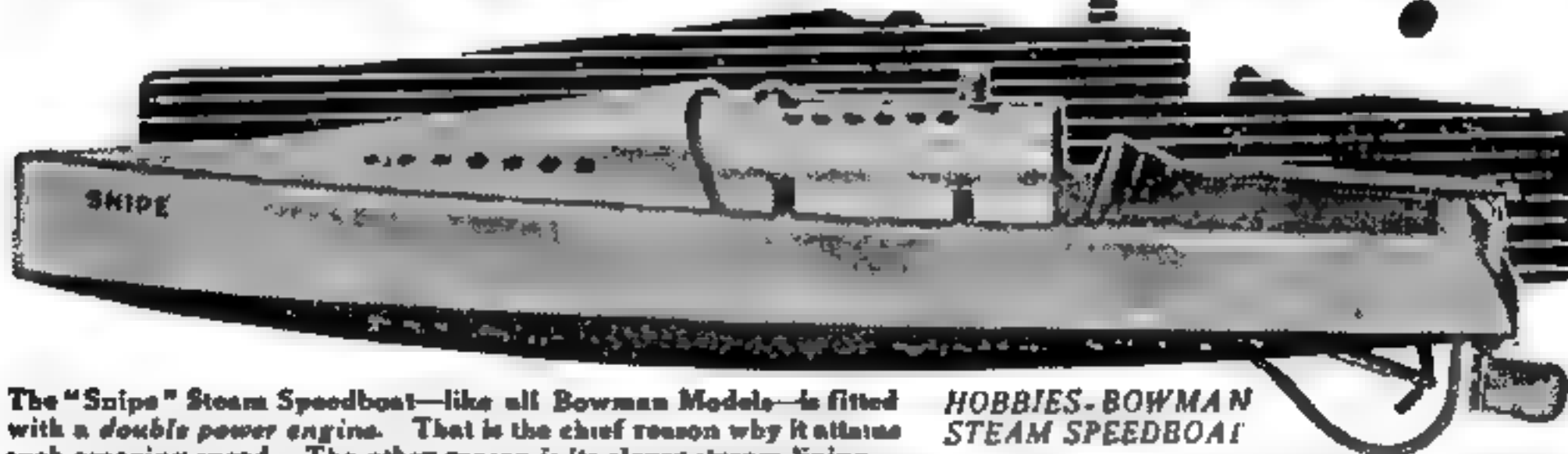
Bubbles circled round the spot where it had vanished and died away.

"That's that!" said Bunter.

And he turned and rolled away by the path under the beeches—and nearly rolled into Judson, the gardener, who

(Continued on next page.)

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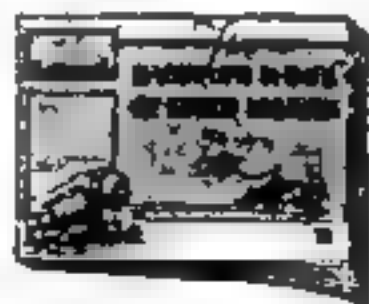
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was coming towards the pool. He wondered guiltily whether Judson had heard the splash.

"I say, I haven't chucked anything into the pool, Judson!" he said hurriedly.

"Haven't you, sir?" said Judson.

"No! Nothing of the kind. I wouldn't, you know."

And Billy Bunter rolled away towards the house, leaving Judson staring.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

The Man in the Austin!

BOB CHERRY stared back from the gliding car, and shook his head dubiously. Colonel Wharton was driving; and the car was fairly well packed with youthful humanity. All the fellows in the car were keeping their eyes open—not only on the scenery. This was the first time Wun Lung had taken a drive since the attack had come from his enemies. And the Famous Five were very much on the alert. Hitherto, Ferrers Locke had directed that the Chinese junior should remain within doors; and as Locke was instructed by Mr. Wun Lung, in China, to guard his son, the detective's directions had been carefully carried out. So the juniors concluded that Locke had given permission for this motor drive.

Almost from the start, Bob Cherry's keen eyes had picked up a tiny Austin car that hung behind, sometimes at a good distance, sometimes drawing near, never dropping quite out of sight.

He drew the attention of his comrades to it more than once. But the man who drove the little Austin certainly was not a Chinaman; and he looked anything but suspicious. He wore a suit of striking checks, on which chess could have been played; his nose was large and very red, and a pair of horn-rimmed glasses gave him a rather owlish look. A pipe, with the bowl downward, hung from the corner of his mouth. He looked something like a racing man, and something like a publican; certainly not a dangerous character. But the way the little Austin hung on the track of the colonel's big car was, at least, rather odd.

"There he is again, you men!" said Bob, after a glance back.

Round a corner, which the colonel's car had turned a minute before, came the little Austin, skimming merrily along.

"That sportsman seems to be sticking to us!" said Johnny Bull.

"The stickfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jarnett Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head.

Harry Wharton had drawn his uncle's attention to the Austin once, and Colonel Wharton had glanced back at it and nodded, taking no further heed. As the colonel did not seem uneasy, the juniors supposed that it was all right; but they gave the Austin a good many unquiet glances. It was obvious that it was deliberately following the car and keeping it in sight; and they could not help regarding it with suspicion.

The car kept up a good speed. Up hill and down dale, by high road and by-road, it went; and always, somewhere in the rear, the little Austin hung on its track.

"If that merchant is after Wun Lung—" said Frank Nugent.

"What else can he be after?" asked Johnny Bull. "He's been following us and watching us all the time."

"My uncle seems to think it's all right!" said Bob Cherry.

right!" said Harry dubiously. "But there's no doubt he's watching us. He hasn't lost sight of us ever since we started."

"He watches plenty!" said Wun Lung, his slanting eyes turned back on the pursuing Austin.

Colonel Wharton glanced round at the juniors with an amused smile on his bronzed face.

"There is no occasion for alarm, my boys," he said. "I am acquainted with the man who is driving that Austin."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob.

"Oh!" said Harry. "I've never seen him before, uncle."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, rather; quite."

The colonel laughed.

"Mr. Locke arranged that we should be kept under observation during the drive," he said. "We cannot be too careful, you know."

"Oh, my hat! Then that's one of Mr. Locke's men!" exclaimed Bob.

The colonel laughed again, and drove on. The Famous Five and the two Chinese juniors stared back at the man in the Austin.

"It's a giddy bodyguard!" said Bob Cherry. "But if that Johnny is a detective, he doesn't look the part."

"Well, I suppose he wouldn't want to look the part when he's on duty," remarked Wharton. "But—"

"He looks more like a jolly old supporter of the drink traffic than a detective," said Bob.

"Well, it's all right if he's one of Mr. Locke's men," said Nugent.

And the juniors settled down to enjoy the drive, only giving an occasional glance back at the red-nosed man who drove the Austin behind.

The car ate up the miles. It was a glorious August morning, and the Surrey hills and dales were looking their best. Mile after mile flew under the swift wheels.

Once or twice the little Austin dropped out of sight, but it always bobbed up again in the rear. Twice or thrice it picked up a great speed and shot ahead, but each time it slackened again, and the colonel's car soon passed it. Every time it came close the juniors eyed the man who drove; but so far as they could observe he gave them no attention. Certainly nobody on the road would have suspected that there was any connection between the two cars.

Colonel Wharton turned homeward at last.

The car passed through Wimford, and on the broad country road beyond the colonel let it out. But the little Austin kept pace behind. The red-nosed man certainly looked as if he was unduly fond of the cup that cheers, judging by his nose; but he evidently knew how to handle a car.

The colonel slowed down, and turned in at the gates of the lodge.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, that Johnny's coming in too!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The Austin followed up the drive.

Colonel Wharton halted before the house, and the juniors alighted. Wun Lung and Hop Hi went into the house at once, but the Famous Five remained on the steps, watching the man in the Austin. Both cars drove away to the garage, and disappeared from the juniors' sight.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You up, Bunter?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's only half-past twelve."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Any letters, Wells?" asked Harry, as the juniors went into the house.

"Yes, sir—several—and a parcel for Master Wun Lung."

"Here's a letter from old Mauly," said Harry. "One for you, Bob, and one for you, Franky. Got your parcel, Wun Lung?"

"No, gottee."

"Where's the parcel, Wells?"

"It was placed on the table with the letters, sir," said Wells. "It is there, I—"

The butler paused. The parcel obviously was not there.

"I say, you fellows, I don't think there was a parcel for Wun Lung," said Bunter. "I should have noticed it when I looked over the letters."

"Fathmad! Have you shifted it?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"He wants parcel," said Wun Lung, his slanting eyes turning suspiciously on the Owl of the Remove. "S'posey parcel comey for me, me wantee."

"It was here, Master Bunter," said Wells, and his eyes also turned very suspiciously on Bunter. "It was certainly placed here with the letters, and I am certain that no one would have moved it."

"But it isn't there now," said Harry.

Wells coughed.

"Apparently not, sir."

"You fat duffer, have you been—?" began Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"He wants parcel, you fatter ole Bunter!" exclaimed Wun Lung.

"If you think I know anything about your parcel, you cheeky heathen—"

"Me sarvy plenty."

"Look here, Bunter—"

"I don't know anything about it, of course," said Bunter airily. "My belief is that there wasn't a parcel at all. Wells is making a mistake—he's rather a fool, you know. I never touched the parcel. It was left exactly where Wells put it when I went out."

"You fat idiot—"

"Besides, there wasn't a parcel at all," said Bunter. "If there had been, I should have noticed it."

"You benighted dummy—"

"Shell out Wun Lung's parcel, you fat villain."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I keep on telling you that there wasn't a parcel, and that I left it exactly where it was when I went out. If you can't take a fellow's word—"

"Oh, great Scott!"

"You blithering bandermatch—"

"If you can't take a fellow's word," said Bunter, with dignity, "I decline to discuss the matter any further." And the Owl of the Remove rolled away with his fat little nose in the air.

"Collar him—oh—ahem!" Bob Cherry broke off as Colonel Wharton came in. He was accompanied by a rather lean gentleman with clear cut features.

"Mr. Locke!" exclaimed Wharton.

Ferrers Locke gave him a smile and a nod.

"I didn't know you were here, sir," said Harry.

"You did not see me arrive?" asked Locke, with another smile.

"N-a-no!"

Colonel Wharton laughed.

"The boys were very observant during the drive, Mr. Locke," he said. "They had their eyes on the Austin."

"I noticed it," assented Mr. Locke.

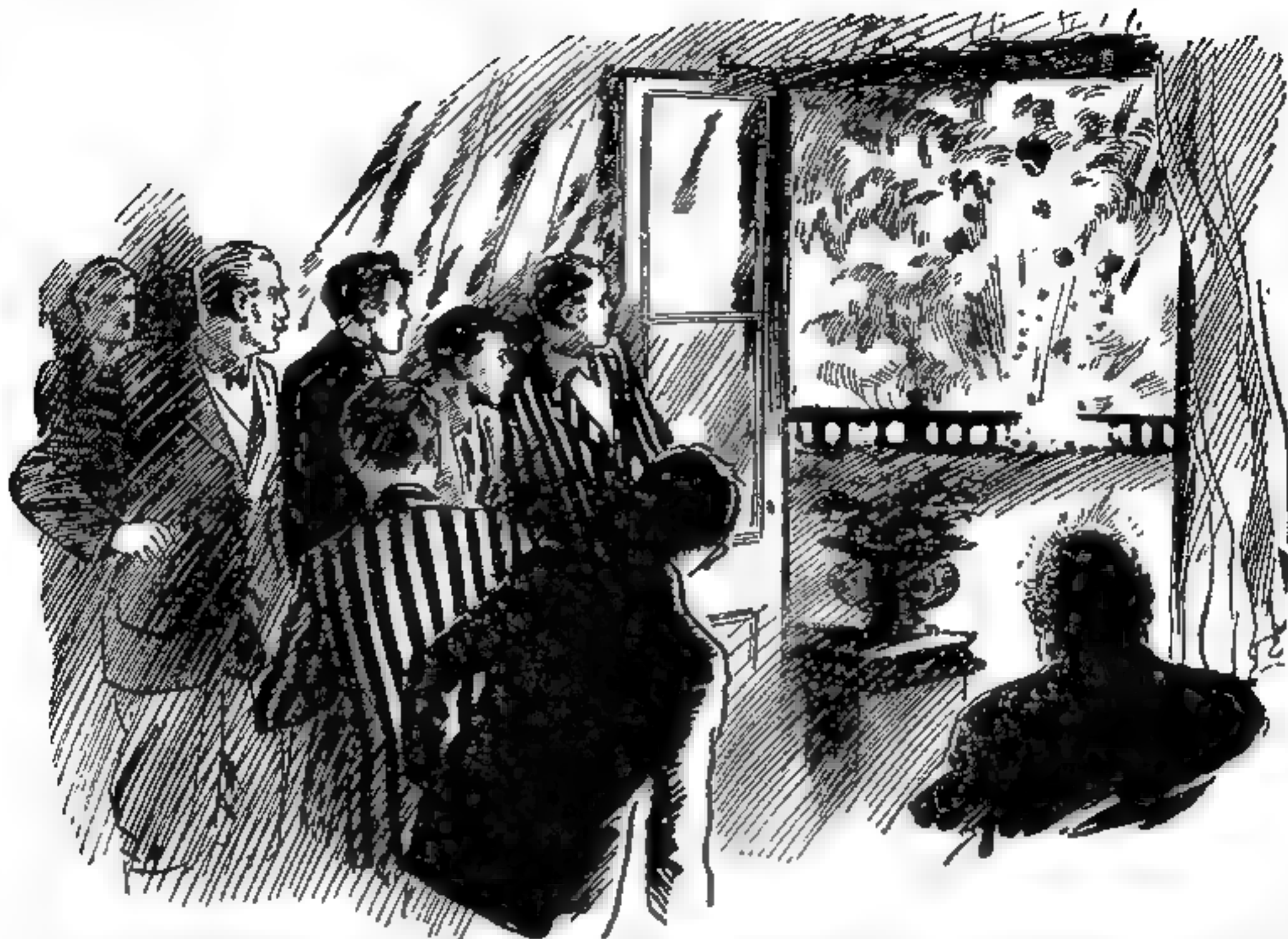
"You noticed it?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, and I was very glad to see you so much on your guard."

"But—but where were you, sir?" asked Wharton, in perplexity.

"In the Austin."

"My hat! I didn't see a passenger in the Austin."



All eyes were turned to the window. "Hark!" From the distance came a sudden roar, and what looked like a gigantic waterspout was flung up into the sky.

"That is very easily accounted for," said Locke. "There was no passenger in the Austin."

"Then—what—how—?" The juniors stared blankly at Locke. "You—you don't mean—" ejaculated Wharton. "My only hat! You weren't that Johnny in the checks and specs with the nose—"

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"Exactly! I have left the checks and the specs and the nose in the car in the garage."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "I—I should never have known—"

"It was necessary, of course, that I should not be known, if there were suspicious characters on the road," said Ferrers Locke. He turned to the colonel. "It would seem, sir, that the coast is clear now. My men have had nothing to report for days, and to-day the Chinese boy has ventured out, without drawing the enemy. It would seem—"

He paused.

"That they have given up the whole thing?" said the colonel. "No doubt they realize by this time that the boy is too carefully guarded for them to reach him."

"It is possible. Or—" Locke paused again. "Or they may have abandoned the idea of an open attack and have resorted to some other scheme. We must not fail to be vigilant. From what I have heard of the mandarin Tang Wang, he is not the man to accept defeat easily. But for the present, at least, it seems that the coast is clear."

But there was a thoughtful shade on the Baker Street detective's brow as he went in to lunch with the rest. For days there had been no sign of an enemy—yet Locke did not believe that

the emissaries of the mandarin Tang Wang had given up the game. It was in his mind that, if the enemy was holding his hand, it was in order to strike suddenly and more surely.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows Nothing!

BILLY BUNTER did not give his whole attention to lunch. Several times he blinked at the other fellows.

For some reason—Bunter did not know why—they suspected him of knowing what had become of Wun Lung's parcel. They couldn't take a fellow's word—even Bunter's word!

The Owl of the Remove could not help suspecting that more was to be heard of the matter after lunch. In the presence of the elders, the chums of the Remove could not deal with Bunter in the necessary drastic manner.

The anticipation was not a pleasant one.

The parcel was gone—gone for good. It would never be seen again, unless some fellow dived to the bottom of the bathing pool and groped for it. Bunter wanted to hear nothing more about it.

But he could see that he was going to hear something! Wun Lung's slanting eyes gleamed at him across the table several times. As the parcel belonged to Wun Lung, he was naturally not so indifferent to its fate as Bunter was.

After lunch, when Miss Wharton was gone, and the colonel and Mr. Locke retired to the library for a talk, Bunter executed a strategic retreat in the direction of his room.

He wanted a nap, and he had decided to take that nap in his own room, with the door locked. It was safer—in the circumstances.

To his great relief he escaped up the staircase unchallenged. But when he reached the passage leading to his room, there was a sudden patter of footsteps behind him.

Bunter blinked round.

"Beasts!" he gasped.

And he put on speed and raced for his room.

"Stop, you fat villain!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Hold on, you burglarious porpoise!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Owl! Beasts!"

Bunter rushed into his room. He slammed the door. But it slammed on Bob Cherry's boot, and was hurled open again.

"Owl! Beasts! Get out!" roared Bunter.

The Famous Five marched in, with Wun Lung and Hop Hi at their heels. Bunter blinked at them in alarm. He rather wished he had remained downstairs now, within hearing of the elders. By retiring to this secluded quarter of the house, he had delivered himself, as it were, into the hands of the Amalekites.

"Now, you fat pincher—" said Harry Wharton.

"If that's the way you talk to a guest, Wharton—"

"Where's Wun Lung's parcel?"

"Look here, I'm sick of that subject," said Bunter. "For goodness' sake give us a rest about that parcel."

"Where is it, you burglar?" demanded Bob.

"How should I know where it is?"

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demanded Bunter. "I don't know anything about it. I don't believe there ever was a parcel. Besides, I suppose I'm not the fellow to touch a fellow's parcel."

"Bunter steals parcel," said Wun Lung indignantly. "Me wantee parcel. P'haps from father."

"That's rot," said Bunter. "It couldn't have been from your father or it would have had a China post-mark."

"Well, hadn't it?" asked Nugent.

"No, it hadn't. It was postmarked London," said Bunter. "Not that I saw it, you know," he added cautiously. "I never set eyes on the thing. If there was really a parcel at all, I think Wells must have punched it."

"Wells?" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, I don't trust that butler of yours," said Bunter, shaking his head. "I've thought several times that he's got a very sly look. Perhaps you fellows had better search Wells' room."

"You podgy jabberwock—"

"You give me parcel!" said Wun Lung. "Me wantee."

"Oh, shut up!" said Bunter. "I tell

you I'm sick of the subject. As if I'd touch your silly parcel. I don't even know how to play mah-jongg and don't want to."

The juniors stared at him.

"Mah-jongg!" repeated Wharton.

"Rotten Chinese game!" said Bunter. "No use to me!"

"Was it a mah-jongg set in the parcel, then?"

"Eh? Oh, no! Nothing of the sort! How should I know, when I never even saw the parcel?"

"You benighted chump—"

"You can call a fellow names," said Bunter. "I call it ungentlemanly to doubt a fellow's word! Low, is what I call it!"

"You silly owl!" roared Bob Cherry. "If you haven't had the parcel, how do you know there was mah-jongg in it?"

"I don't know," answered Bunter.

"I don't know anything about it, naturally. I'm not so interested in other fellows' parcels as you fellows seem to be. I'm not inquisitive, I hope."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Now let the subject drop," said

Bunter peevishly. "I'm fed-up with it! Besides, I want a nap!"

"Now, look here, you fat dummy!" said Harry. "The parcel's got to be produced. If it had grub in it, I suppose the grub would be gone beyond recovery by this time. But if it was a mah-jongg set, as you say, why the thump can't you hand it over and have done with it?"

"Shut the door after you!" said Bunter.

"I tell you, you fat stump, that you've got to cough it up! Can't you see that my uncle will have to be told, if Wun Lung's parcel is missing?"

"I—I say, I wouldn't mention it to that old codger—" stammered Bunter uneasily.

"That what?"

"Old codger! He might think I'd punched it," said Bunter. "He's rather a suspicious old beast, as you know, Wharton, being his nephew."

"My only hat! I'll—"

"Here, you keep off!" yelled Bunter, dodging round his bed. "If this is what you call being civil to a guest—"

(Continued on next page.)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Here your Editor is pleased to answer questions and discuss topics of general interest. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C.4. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

Well, here we are again, chums, with another bumper issue of your jolly old favourite. I'm taking it for granted that you are all entering our fascinating cricket competition. The picture puzzles are simple enough to solve, aren't they? And think of the topping prizes offered—two cricket bats autographed by each member of the Australian Test team, and a dozen special "Hornby Train" Sets—enough to gladden the heart of any boy. If you've missed the first three sets of puzzle pictures, you can still obtain them by applying to our Back Number Department, Bear Alley, E.C.4, and enclosing stamps to the value of copies required, plus postage.

Before going any farther I've been asked to publish the following:

PLAY UP, THE BAND!

Cardiff members of the Magnet—and there are shoals of them—who are keen musicians, should communicate with Douglas S. Morgan, 26, University Place, Splott, Cardiff, who is starting a young jazz band. Naturally he wants to enlist the services of good men who can handle with dexterity the fiddle, the xylophone, the saxophone, the piano, the flute, and all the other instruments. Roll up, and play up! Cardiff has never been backward in facing the music.

MY postbag this week is one of the most interesting I have received for a long time. For instance, how many of you know—

HOW MOTORS ARE TESTED?

I must confess I did not know until I received a letter from N. Westley, of

Wakall, who is one of my readers, and who works in the engine-testing department of a famous Midland motor firm. In his interesting letter he tells me that the engines are bolted down to the test beds, which are fitted with brakes on which various loads can be placed, a taxometer, an oil gauge, a water gauge, and petrol and water equipment.

The engines run for three and a half hours, during which time the speeds and power of the engine under different loads are taken. The sparking plugs, magneto, dynamo, carburettor, and oil starter are tested before the engine is passed off by an inspector. After that it is painted and sent on a chassis-erecting line.

Many thanks for your information, N. W.; I like to hear details of what my readers are doing. Thanks, also, for the many nice things you say about the Magnet. And now to answer your query

CONCERNING "TALKIES."

As I explained some time ago, there are two methods of synchronising talk with pictures, one by means of specially-prepared gramophone records, and the other by means of a strip of light "waves" on the side of the film. The sound is "magnified" by means of amplifiers, in the same manner as wireless is amplified for a loud speaker. Next time you are in an up-to-date gramophone shop, ask them to let you see an electrical radio gramophone, and you will see the amplifier which magnifies the sound, and this will give you a much better idea than I can express in writing. "Talkies" are amplified in the same manner as the electrical gramophone; but, of course, the apparatus is much more elaborate—and much more expensive!

By the way, may I point out to this chum, and to several others who have written to me, that I cannot answer questions the week after I receive your letters? This paper of ours goes to press some weeks before it reaches you—which

is why you have to wait some weeks for your replies.

Here are a few rapid replies:

"A Houslow Reader."—Thunder is caused by the electricity in the clouds leaping from one cloud to another. Lightning is the flash of the electricity as it leaps across, and thunder is the report it makes. By measuring the length of time between seeing the flash and hearing the thunder, you can gauge whether the electrical storm is far away or near.

Donald Turrell (Lowisham).—After working eight hours a day a man requires seven to seven and a half hours' sleep. A growing boy requires about eight hours. Glad you like our paper, and I hope you'll remain a reader for many years to come.

H. Best (no address).—Your Italian coin is only worth about a penny! If your French coin is dated 1903 it is practically worthless. If it is dated 1703 its value depends upon its condition. Ask the curator of your local museum to have a look at it. He will be pleased to tell you if it is valuable.

I am afraid that is all the space I have to devote to questions this week, but I will answer those which I have held over in due course.

Now a word or two about next week's programme. Frank Richards will be well to the fore with a top-notch yarn of Greyfriars, entitled:

"ALL ABOARD FOR CHINA!"

One of my readers wrote to me last week and said that Frank Richards must be a genius to create such varying and interesting characters as Harry Wharton & Co., and to write such enthralling and widely-different stories around them. Well, that is high praise, but when you've read next week's yarn I am sure you will all agree with this reader. So don't on any account miss it.

There will be another fine instalment of George E. Rochester's thrilling War yarn, which will hold you breathless, and another topping issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," which, needless to say, will keep you chuckling.

The shorter features will be a "Correspondent's" poem by our special rhymster, jokes and limericks, and last, but not least, a few more cheery words from

YOUR EDITOR,

"Wun Lung's got to have his parcel!" bawled Wharton.
"Blow Wun Lung, and bother his parcel! He's got a mah-jongg set already. What does he want with another?"

"Me wantee parcel."
"Go and eat ooke!" snorted Bunter.
"If there was a parcel, which I don't believe, it's disappeared; and there's an end of it. It's absolutely caddish to make out that I know anything about it!"

"Bunter no savvy parcel!" demanded Wun Lung.

"No; never even heard of it till you fellows mentioned it to me. I dare say Wells had it."

"Me goey askee Fellels Locke."
"Ferrers Locke!" exclaimed Bob. The little Chinese nodded.
"Fellels Locke gleet detective! He findes parcel!"

"Oh, my hat! What a case for Ferrers Locke!" chuckled Bob.

"I say, you fellows, I wouldn't mention it to Locke! He's a suspicious beast, like the old codger—"

"We jolly well know Bunter had it!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Me goey askee Fellels Locke!" said Wun Lung, and he glided out of the room, followed by Hop Hii.

"I say, you fellows, it's rather rotten to bother Ferrers Locke with a trifle like that," said Bunter uneasily. "I shouldn't wonder if he thinks it was me, just like you fellows. He might."

"The mightfulness is terrible!" chuckled Hurree Singh.

"Well, it's Wun Lung's property, so we must leave it to him," said Harry, and the Famous Five followed the two Chinese, Bob Cherry thoughtfully extracting the key from the door as he went.

Bunter snorted, and settled himself down on his bed for a nap. He had been rather worried during lunch; but he had not forgotten to do justice to that meal, and he needed a rest after his exertions. He very soon forgot Wun Lung and his parcel, and his deep snore awoke the adjacent echoes by the time Harry Wharton & Co. reached the hall.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bomb!

SHAKE!
Snore!
Shake, shake!
"Ooooooh!"

"Wako up, Bunter!"
"Beast!"

Billy Bunter had not been asleep ten minutes. His little round eyes opened reluctantly. Someone was shaking him with considerable force.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter. "Leggo! Leave off shaking me, you rotter, or I'll jolly well punch your nose, you beast!"

"Wake up, Bunter!" It was the quiet, stern voice of Ferrers Locke. "Wake up at once!"

"Oh! I—I d.dn't know it was you, Mr. Locke!" gasped Bunter. "I thought it was some other beast!"

Bunter sat up, groped for his spectacles, jammed them on his nose, and blinked at Ferrers Locke. It was the detective who was shaking him into wakefulness.

"Owl! I'm awake now! What's the row?" demanded Bunter. "If those beasts have been telling you I know anything about a parcel—"

"Get up!"

"The fact is, I'm having a nap, Mr. Locke—"

"Get up!"

"You see, I'm rather sleepy—"
"You fat chump!" roared Bob Cherry. "I'll jolly well have you that bed by your ears, if you don't get up!"

"Beast!"
Bunter rolled off the bed. He stood blinking indignantly at Ferrers Locke and the group of Greyfriars juniors.

There was a stern expression on the Baker Street detective's face. Evidently he had been acquainted with the mystery of the missing parcel; and for some reason he was taking a very grave view of the matter.

"Bunter! You removed a parcel from the table in the hall this morning—"

GREYFRIARS CORRESPONDENTS

No. 9.

Our Merry Rhyme-ster doesn't smoke, but he called in at Harold Skinner's study for local colour for this week's "effort." That he got what he wanted you'll see below.

DEAR pater—in some apprehension
And more than an atom of dread,

*I'm writing this letter to mention
I've just had a "jaw" from the Head.
He summoned me to his presence;
I knocked at the knees, I confess;
And this, pater dear, was the essence
Of his disapproving address.*

"Now, Skinner"—(his aspect was stormy;

No wonder my bony knees knocked!)
"I've summarily brought you before me
To say I'm disgusted and shocked!
Your conduct has been of the blackest,
A fact which you cannot disprove;
Your Form master calls you the slackest
And basest boy in the Remove!"

"You were guilty of gross inattention,
Your wandering thoughts taking wing;

*And whilst you were under detention
You did a despicable thing!*
You were caught in the act, sir, of smoking
A pungent and vile cigarette;

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "My idea is that Wells had it—"

"Tell me the truth, and at once!"
"I think it must have been Wells, if there was a parcel at all. But I don't really believe there was a parcel."

"Bunter, this is a serious matter—more serious than you can possibly imagine," said Ferrers Locke. "Do not talk nonsense, but tell me the plain facts immediately. It may be a matter of life or death."

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Bunter.

"Where is the parcel? If it is in this room your life may be in danger."

"Oh crikey! It's not here!" gasped Bunter. "Oh dear! I—I say, how could a mah-jongg set be dangerous?"

There was nothing else in it—only a box of mah-jongg. Oh crumbs!"

"Is it in the house?"

"N-n-no."
"Thank goodness for that, at least!" said Locke. "Your foolish meddling may have saved lives, if matters are as I suspect."

"Oh crikey!"

"You opened the parcel?"

"I—I say, I—I don't mind telling you in—in confidence, you know!" gasped Bunter. "But—"

"Tell me at once! The matter is of the greatest importance. Did you open the parcel?"

"Ye-e-s," stammered Bunter.

"What was inside it?"



*Such conduct is really provoking—
Stay, Skinner! I've not finished yet!*

*"To-night, I shall write to your father,
And bring your misdeeds to his view;
And I shall inform him I'd rather
He gave you the chastisement due.
So when you go home for Vacation
Prepare for your punishment dire!
A sound and severe castigation
At the hands of your horrified sire!"*

*Dear pater—the Head's a romancer,
So heed not the letter he mails;
I can give you a jolly good answer
To all of his trumpery tales!
The cigarettes in my possession
Are facts that cannot be denied;
But boldly I make this confession—
They all were of chocolate inside!*

*So spare me the rod of correction,
And calm my forebodings and fear;
My conduct will bear close inspection—
I'm one of the best fellows here!
By Wharton and Nugent and Cherry
My praises are chanted and carolled;
A virtuous fellow—ah, very!
Is your ever-affectionate, HAROLD.*

"A—a box."
"Did you open the box?"
"Nunno! It was marked mah-jongg on the lid, so I hadn't any use for it. A rotten Chinese game—"

"You may, I think, thank your good fortune that you did not open the box!" said Ferrers Locke, with a deep breath. "I should be very much surprised if it turned out to contain anything so harmless as a game of mah-jongg."

Billy Bunter's eyes opened wide behind his spectacles.

"But—but it said 'mah-jongg' on the lid!" he stuttered.

Locke was silent for a moment.

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Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another in wonder.

They had rather expected Ferrers Locke to be amused, when Wun Lung told him of the missing parcel, with a request that the great detective should "find" it.

But Locke had been anything but amused.

He had questioned the juniors sharply, and learning that they had no doubt that Bunter bagged the parcel, he hastily inquired where Bunter was; and lost no time in hurrying to the junior's room. The Famous Five followed him, wondering what it all meant. Evidently Ferrers Locke was deeply and intensely interested in the missing parcel—why, the chums of the Remove could not guess.

"What have you done with that box, Bunter?" asked Locke at last.

"It—it fell in the pool!"

"What pool?"

"The bathing-pool! You—you see, I—I took it out of the house to open it! Of course, I wasn't going to eat it, if it had been Turkish Delight or anything. I—"

"You threw it into the pool!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Well, that little, beathan beast painted my face while I was asleep the other day," said Bunter warmly. "If you think I'm going to let a beastly heathen paint my face—"

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Besides, I didn't chuck it into the pool! It—it sort of fell in."

"Bunter fatter lotter!" said Wun Lung.

"Yah!"

"So it is at the bottom of the bathing-pool now," said Ferrers Locke. "All the better, perhaps! Now, Bunter, answer me carefully; the matter is important. What was the postmark on the parcel?"

"London," answered Bunter. "It came from a store—Blackley's Stores. There was a label on it."

"From a London store! Such a label could be obtained surreptitiously," said Locke. He turned to Wun Lung. "You were not expecting a parcel from a London store?"

"No expectee," said Wun Lung.

"If you had received it, however, and found the mah-jongg box inside, you would undoubtedly have opened the box?"

"Yes," said Wun Lung, in wonder. "Me opee, see what inside. Me tinkee plays some Siend sendee me mah-jongg. Velly nicey Chinese gamey."

"I—I say, what do you think was in the box?" gasped Bunter. "It—it said mah-jongg on the lid—"

"None of you boys must go anywhere near the bathing-pool, for the present," said Ferrers Locke. "You will see to that, Wharton."

"Certainly," said Harry.

Ferrers Locke hurried from the room. Harry Wharton and Co. looked at one another blankly.

"What the thump—I!" said Bob Cherry.

"What on earth has Locke got in his noodle?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Blessed if I know," said Harry. "unless—" he broke off, the colour wavering in his cheeks.

"Unless what?"

"Unless—if the parcel came from those brutes who are after Wun Lung—there was danger in it—"

"Great Scott! Not—not—not a bomb?" ejaculated Bob.

"Oh clumbs!" gasped Wun Lung.

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There was a startled howl from Bunter. He blinked at the juniors, his fat face like chalk.

"I—I say, you fellows," he stuttered, through his chattering teeth. "I—I say—a—a—a bomb! Oh crikey! And—and I had it in my hands—I—I carried it as far the pip—pip—pool—oh dear! I—I might have been blown up! I—"

Bunter collapsed on the bed, shaking like a fat jelly. Harry Wharton and Co., with very grave faces, went downstairs, leaving Bunter to quake. They found Ferrers Locke and Colonel Wharton in the hall. The colonel's face was very disturbed, and he was tugging at his grizzled moustache.

"It seems scarcely possible!" he was saying. "I—I can scarcely credit it, Mr. Locke! Such dastardly villainy is—"

"We cannot be certain, yet," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "But a parcel, from an unknown source, addressed to Wun Lung, is an object of very great suspicion in the present circumstances. If matters are as I fear, the bomb would be fixed to explode when the box was opened—"

"Good gad!"

"I repeat, we cannot be certain, until we ascertain the contents of the box. But I am thankful that Wun Lung was

WRITE A GREYFRIARS LIMERICK and WIN A WALLET!

Maul's letter by Bunter was found
When "My Lord" wasn't
knocking around.
Then the flap came unstuck,
And the "Owl" blessed
his "luck,"
And extracted the "lean" of
a pound.

Wallet to: Thomas P. O'Brazil,
Buckley Hall, Rochdale, Lancs.
POST YOUR LIMERICK
TO-NIGHT!

not here when it arrived—and that it was missing when he came in. It is practically certain that he would have opened the box, suspecting nothing of—"

"But if he had not opened it—"

"I have no doubt that, if it is a bomb, it is timed to explode, after a certain lapse of time, whether opened or not," said Ferrers Locke.

"Good gad," repeated the colonel. "If it is as you suspect, Mr. Locke, it is fortunate that the horrible thing is in a safe place, owing to the meddling of that stupid boy, Bunter—"

Colonel Wharton was interrupted.

"Hark!"

From a distance came a sudden, rending roar.

All eyes turned on the windows. In the distance, over the trees that surrounded the bathing-pool, what looked like a water-spout was flung up to the sky. The roar of the explosion rolled over the park like thunder, and windows shook and rattled about the house.

"Good heavens!" muttered the colonel huskily.

A dead silence followed the explosion. The echoes died away, and all was still. The juniors looked at one another with pale faces.

The voice of Ferrers Locke broke the silence.

"There is no doubt now!" he said. "It came from Wun Lung's enemies—and it was a bomb! We are not done with them yet."

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Who's for China?

"ME gooy 'way!"

Wun Lung spoke quietly.

It was the following day.

There was something like a hush on Wharton Lodge. The explosion of the bomb, sent through the post to Wun Lung, had brought home to the minds of all the occupants of the Lodge, more clearly than ever before, the deadly danger that menaced Wun Lung—and all his friends.

Owing to Bunter's fatuous intervention, the bomb had exploded in a harmless place. The explosion had damaged the bathing-pool, and many of the trees that surrounded it; but that was a trifle. Had it exploded in the house, not only Wun Lung, but probably many others, would have fallen helpless victims.

The Chinese had spoken little since, but his yellow face had been very thoughtful. He was thinking of the fearful peril that his presence in the Lodge brought on his friends.

The danger that had been so narrowly escaped had only made Colonel Wharton all the more determined to protect the Chinese junior against his dastardly enemies. So far from being daunted, the old soldier seemed to snuff the battle like a warhorse. And the chums of the Remove shared his feelings.

Ferrers Locke remained in the house. All knew that the Baker Street detective expected another blow to fall, sooner or later—that he was vigilantly on the watch against it. Yet, in the nature of things, he could not tell when and whence the blow might come. The enemy was unknown, unseen; and chose his own time and his own method.

And Wun Lung, thinking it out, slowly but surely in the calm Chinese way, had made up his mind.

"Me gooy 'way," he repeated. "Me no tinkee light stayee hole. Plaps you all killy, s'pose me stay."

"Rot, old chap," said Bob Cherry. "We're game!"

"The gamefulness is terrific, my esteemed Wun Lung."

"Cheese it, kid," said Harry. "You're not going. You'll be in greater danger anywhere else."

"Plaps!" assented Wun Lung. "But me no stayee. No tinkee light! Plaps nicey ole colonel killy—"

"My uncle's a soldier," said Harry. "He's faced worse things than this, kid. Flanders was warmer than those brutes are likely to make this house."

"Nicey, ole, beautiful ladde plaps killy," said Wun Lung.

"I think my aunt will be going away for a time," said Harry. But he did not speak with conviction. Both her brother and nephew had endeavoured to persuade Miss Wharton to visit some friends at a safe distance; but the old lady, with all her gentle ways, had a strain of the family obstinacy. And she calmly declined to leave her brother and nephew in danger.

"All you nicey, handsome fellows plaps killy!" said Wun Lung, shaking his head.

"We'll chance it, old bean," said Nugent. "We're jolly well stoking to you till this circus is over."

"The stickfulness will be—"

"Preposterous!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Even Bunter's sticking," said Johnny Bull. "Yesterday he was in

such a blue funk that he couldn't stir. And I noticed that he had only nine helpings at supper. But he's recovered now, haven't you, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Bull—" Bunter, who had that after-lunch feeling, was nodding in an armchair. He sat up to blink indignantly at the juniors. "Who was in a funk yesterday, I'd like to know?"

"You were, you fat boulder! You were shaking like a fat jelly. Like a giddy blancmange."

"That's the sort of thing I expect from you fellows," said Bunter bitterly. "What would have happened to you all, I'd like to know, if it hadn't been for my wonderful pluck?"

"Your wonderful whatter?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Pluck!" hooted Bunter. "I call it plucky to collar a live bomb, carry it out of the house, and throw it into a pond. Chaps have got the Victoria Cross for that kind of thing."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Why, you fat fraud," roared Johnny Bull, "you didn't know it was a bomb. You wouldn't have gone within a mile of it if you'd known."

"Pile it on!" sneered Bunter. "I expect this sort of jealousy! I've saved all your lives with my boundless pluck, and this is the thanks I get."

"Bunter velly funnee."

"Mean to say you knew there was a bomb in Wun Lung's parcel?" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Of course. At least, I suspected it. That's why I bagged it. I hope you fellows don't think I bagged it because I thought there was tuck in it."

"He, he, ha!"

"You can cackle," said Bunter. "But the truth is, that suspecting it to be a bomb, I bagged it, and carried it out to the pool and threw it in to shave all your wives—I mean to save all your lives. I'm accustomed to ingratitude, but really, you fellows, there's a limit."

"You fat fibber!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bunter, with a wave of a pudgy hand. "You're ungrateful—and there's an end of it. You rely on me to protect you, and I play up. At least you might say 'Thank you!'"

Bob Cherry winked at his comrades. "And if they landed another bomb here, you'd collar it and walk off with it!" he demanded.

"Naturally," answered Bunter calmly. "I'm the only fellow here that would have the pluck. I've proved that."

"What's that under Bunter's chair?" asked Nugent, taking his cue from Bob.

Bunter jumped up.

"I—I say, is—is there anything under my chair?"

"Let's look," said Bob; and he stooped behind the big armchair, and peered under it.

"He, he, he!" Bunter sat down again. "You can't pull my leg, you know. He, he, he!"

The back of the chair being between Bunter and Bob, Bunter naturally did not observe that playful youth detach his watch—a large, silver one, of the 'turnip' variety, with a pronounced tick—and slip it on the floor under the chair. Having placed it there, Bob jumped back with dramatic suddenness.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Do you fellows hear anything?" he exclaimed.

"He, he, he!" Bunter chortled. "You can't pull my leg. I jolly well know there isn't anything there."

"Listen!"

Bob held up his hand. The juniors, with grave, startled faces, listened. Bunter became silent and listened, too. He felt sure that this was an attempt to pull his fat leg. Still, a bomb was a bomb. Bunter did not like bombs.

There was a dead silence. Through the silence there came a faint sound of ticking.

"You hear it?" breathed Bob Cherry.

"I—I hear it!" gasped Wharton. "Something's—something's ticking under Bunter's chair. I hear it quite plainly."

"Run for it!" exclaimed Nugent.



The sound of that faint but deadly sounding ticking from under his chair was too much for Bunter. With a howl he leaped up and was out of the room in a moment!

"Don't you run, Bunter! Look under the chair! It may not be a bomb!"

"Yarooooch!"

The sound of that faint, deadly ticking from under his chair was enough for Bunter. He leaped out of the armchair as if the seat had become suddenly red hot. With a wild bound he reached the staircase.

"Stop!" roared Bob Cherry. "Seize it and carry it out, Bunter!"

"Yarooooch!"

"Save us, Bunter!"

"Owl! Oh crumbs! Oh!"

Bunter streaked up the stairs. Considering the weight he had to lift, his speed was wonderful. He was not, apparently, thinking of saving anybody.

"He, he, ha!" roared the juniors.

Bob Cherry fielded his watch, and returned it to his pocket. Bunter did not stop till he reached his room, where he locked the door, and listened with distended ears for the expected explosion. He listened in vain.

Harry Wharton & Co. sat down again, chuckling.

"Fatter ole Bunter plenty funkee," grinned Wun Lung.

"The funkfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "But the ludicrous Bunter is the only esteemed funk here, my absurd Wun Lung, and we are going to stick to you like ridiculous glue."

"Hear, hear!"

Wun Lung smiled.

"Me say 'way," he said firmly. "Me no tinkes light bling too muchee dangee along this house."

Rats! said Bob.

"But where will you go, kid?" asked Harry.

He could see that the Chinese junior was resolved.

"Me goey along home," said Wun Lung.

"China!" exclaimed all the juniors together.

"What you tinkee? S'posed me stay here, soonee, latee, Tang Wang killy. In fathee house in China, me allee

light. Me sendee telegram tellee fathee comey home."

The juniors looked at one another. It was, when they came to think of it, probable that the Chinese schoolboy would be safer in his father's house in China, than in a distant land where he was the object of incessant attacks from unseen enemies.

"Me tinkes bestee," said Wun Lung. "Hop Hi goey back along Gloyfials. Tang Wang no waites killy Hop Hi. Wantee killy me. Me goey back along China."

"But," said Harry, "you're safe here, more or less. But if they try to get at you on your journey—it's a thumping long way to China!"

"Plaps Fellets Locke comey, lookes after this Chinco."

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob. "Look here, we'll jolly well all go and see Wun Lung safe home. I'll jolly well get my pater to agree."

"Good egg!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "But what about next term at Greyfriars?"

"We'll make our people get leave from the Head. Who wouldn't rather go to China, than grind Latin with Quelchey in the Form-room?"

"What ho!" chuckled Nugent. "But if—"

"My hat! We might be able to fix it!" said Harry, his eyes glistening. "If the kid goes, there's no doubt that he would be safer with us along with him to look after him."

"Yes, rather"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

And the Famous Five put their heads together, and, subject to leave from parents and headmaster, the matter was settled. Wun Lung's slanting eyes shone with satisfaction.

"Plenty good!" he said. "Me gooy. And s'posse you felloes comey, me allee light. Plenty too muchee good."

And the chums of the Remove agreed that a trip to China—if it came off—would undoubtedly be "plenty too muchee good." Indeed, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh declared that the muchfulness would be terrific.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

ON to China!

"CHINA," said Billy Bunter thoughtfully.

China, the Flowery Land, the land of rice fields and pagodas, of pigtailed pirates. China, the changeless land. Unchanged, at heart, after many centuries, in spite of changes on the surface.

China, the land that had been ordered and civilized when the ancient Britons painted with wood, wandered in the forests of Britain, and the ancestors of the English had not yet crossed the North Sea.

China, which had seen the Roman Empire rise, and seen it fall, and survived unchanged through the long centuries!

That strange land, so mysterious, so attractive, was in the thoughts of all the Greyfriars fellows. They thought of it, and talked of it, every day; while Wun Lung waited for the answer to his cable, sent to his father in the far-off Celestial land.

Bunter thought of it, too! If Wun Lung went, the other fellows were going, and Bunter had to decide whether he was going, also.

It was rather a problem for Bunter.

There were pros and cons. Bunter had a very vague idea of China. He pictured mighty rivers rolling through vast rice-fields, crowded with junks that swarmed with pigtailed pirates. The possibility of a yellow man slicing his bullet head off with a huge, curved sword was not attractive to Bunter. On the other hand, Bunter liked the idea of travel, on the condition that somebody else footed the bill. Still more attractive was the prospect of missing part of the term at Greyfriars. No Latin with Quelch; no mathematics with Lascelles, no work of any sort! Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles at the idea of no work for weeks and weeks and weeks!

He had heard that the Chinese were good cooks. That was another attraction. On the other hand, he had heard that they ate cats and dogs, and sharks' fins and birds' nests, and all sorts of weird things—which did not appeal to him. Still, on the whole, Bunter considered it probable that he would do well in the way of grub.

There might be danger! That wasn't attractive. But Bunter was rather good at looking after his fat self. A fellow could dodge danger; and, after all, it was really only Wun Lung who stood in peril, and perhaps fellows who tried to protect him. Bunter wasn't going to endanger himself by trying to protect anybody. That would be all right!

Besides, the Owl of the Remove was not accustomed to looking ahead. He was as brave as a lion when there was no danger, and at the present moment there wasn't any.

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Bunter decided to go.

Having, after several days of cogitation, reached that decision, Bunter communicated it to the other fellows.

"You chaps can rely on me," he said. "I'm sticking to you! If you go, I go to look after you!"

"Fathead!" was Bob Cherry's reply.

Bunter ignored that.

"Of course, there's one or two things to be settled," he remarked. "Fares will have to be paid. I say it'll be rather steep."

"The steepfulness will be terrific!"

"My idea is that, as we're going for the special purpose of protecting Wun Lung, his father ought to stand the exes," said Bunter. "That seems to me only fair. What do you think, Wun Lung?"

"Me tinkes fat ole Bunter velly funnee."

"I shall have to make a few conditions," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I shall want to travel first-class all the way. No petty economy."

"Is that all?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Well, no. I shall want some pocket-money. Not a lot, of course—say, a few pounds a week."

"Anything else?"

"Well, you fellows must understand that you will have to behave yourselves, if I'm going to travel with you. No larks, you know! None of your Remove passage ragging! I shall expect you to keep an eye on me, and act as I act—"

"We can't all be pigs," said Johnny Bull, shaking his head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky beast! Mind, I mean what I say," said Bunter. "I'm not travelling with a Bank Holiday crowd. If we don't travel in good style, I shan't come."

"That's all right, old bean; you won't come, anyway," said Bob Cherry consolingly. "So don't worry."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Bunter no safee in China," said Wun Lung.

"Eh? Why?" asked Bunter.

"Pape Chinaman tinkes little fat pig, killy, eatee."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cheeky heathen!" roared Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind not to come now."

"Stick to that, old fat man," said Bob.

"But as you fellows won't be safe without me—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'll come," said Bunter. "I'm not the fellow to think of myself, as you know. For your sakes, I'll come."

"My dear man," said Harry Wharton kindly, "it's for our sakes that you won't come! We couldn't possibly roll you ten thousand miles. Give us a rest!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, snorting. This was rather a "lacer" for Bunter. He had thought it out, long and carefully, and decided to go with the party. It was quite disagreeable to find that the party had decided otherwise.

But Billy Bunter was a stickler! He tackled Colonel Wharton on the subject, inquiring whether he did not think that if the fellows went, he—Bunter—ought to go with them to see that they came to no harm.

"Absurd!" said the colonel.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Nonsense!"

Bunter gave the colonel up. He put it to Ferrers Locke next. The Baker Street detective gave him an amused smile.

"I am afraid, Bunter—" he began.

"That's all right, Mr. Locke," interrupted Bunter. "Nothing to be afraid of, if I'm with you! You see, I shall look after the whole party."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Locke. "I was going to say, I am afraid you would be quite useless and a general nuisance, and that it would be most injudicious for you to make one of such a party."

"That's rot!" said Bunter.

"What?"

"Rot!"

Mr. Locke gave him a look and turned away. Bunter had an impression that he was annoyed about something, he did not know what. But it was plain that he was going to get no support from that quarter.

The whole party seemed to be unanimous on the subject. For the next day or two Bunter wore an air of offended dignity. But even that did not seem to trouble the Greyfriars fellows unduly. Indeed, they did not even seem to observe it.

There was general excitement when the cable arrived from China. It was a long cable, addressed to Ferrers Locke, and must have cost Mr. Wun Chung Lung a large amount of money. It arrived after lunch; and Bunter, fortunately, was having a nap just then. The other fellows gathered to hear the detective's communication.

"Mr. Wun desires his son to return to China with all possible speed," said Locke. "He thinks—and I fully agree with him—that Wun Lung will be safer under his personal care."

"Fathee plenty savvy!" said Wun Lung.

"He desires me to undertake the journey to China," went on Ferrers Locke, "to see Wun Lung safe home. I shall do so."

"Tankee velly muchee, handsome Mister Locke."

Locke smiled.

"With regard to Wun Lung's suggestion to his father that some of his friends should travel with him, Mr. Wun very heartily welcomes the idea, and offers to pay all expenses."

"Wun, old bean, your pater's a sportsman," said Bob Cherry.

"Hear, hear!"

"Mr. Wun expresses grateful thanks to his son's friends for wishing to accompany him and protect him on the journey, and promises a very cordial welcome to all of them."

"Bravo!"

"Mr. Wun also thinks that Hop Hi will be safer apart from his brother at the present time," said Locke. "I agree with him. Hop Hi will remain at Greyfriars, he will, of course, be kept under observation there. There is no doubt that Wun Lung's journey home will be a dangerous one, and it is useless for Hop Hi to share that peril."

Mr. Locke paused.

"Now, my boys, I tell you quite frankly that danger will dog every step of the journey to China," he went on. "I understand that you have already obtained the consent of your people to make this journey if it is to be made. But—"

"Never mind the buts, sir!" said Bob Cherry. "We're jolly well going!"

"No dangerousness can be too terrific for us, honoured sahib," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"What do you say, Colonel Wharton?" asked Locke. "Your nephew will undoubtedly be imperilled if he accompanies Wun Lung."

Wharton looked rather anxiously at his uncle. The old colonel tugged at his moustache.

(Continued on page 25.)

THE GREAT WAR! Behind the grim tragedy of the titanic struggle between nations engaged in a battle to the death, the work of the SECRET SERVICE, silent, sinister, strangely efficient, goes on . . .

THE FLYING SPY!

By GEO. E. ROCHESTER.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Brought down in British territory, Guido von Sturm, a brilliant flying ace, is told to his utter consternation and dismay that he is Guy Tempest—an Englishman—son of Colonel Tempest. Obtaining permission from the British authorities, the young aviator visits Dr. Zolhoff, his guardian. The latter, who is chief of the German Secret Service, is forced to admit the truth—namely, that the boy is English and that he was kidnapped as an infant. Overpowering the doctor, Guy gets away with a paper containing information of the most vital importance to England. The lad is captured, but escapes and, securing a fast plane on a forged German Secret Service introductory letter, makes for the British lines. He is intercepted, however, by four German planes, which he shoots down, the last of these being piloted by a former friend. Guy lands to rescue his friend from the crashed machine, but the latter dies. A squad of soldiers approach, and fearing detection, Guy returns to his plane.

The Passing of Von Sturm.

GUY had left his propeller ticking over. Snapping down his goggles, his gloved fingers closed on the throttle. The drone of the quietly running engine rose to a deep, pulsating roar. With increasing impetus the machine moved forward across the bumpy turf until the ground was swirling past, a grayish blur. The tail came up, and as the boy eased back the control-stick the monoplane soared into the air.

At one hundred feet it banked, and coming about, headed westwards towards the line.

It was at seven-thirty a.m. that morning that the telephone-bell trilled sharply in the office of the General Officer Commanding British Wing Headquarters at Le Courban.

His aide-de-camp, Captain Stuart, answered the call, then, replacing the receiver, rose to his feet and made his way briskly to the quarters of Brigadier-General Clayton.

"Report by telephone from French General Headquarters at Rambervilliers, sir," he said, rigid at attention. "A German plot giving the name of Guido von Sturm landed behind our lines one hour after dawn this morning. French General Headquarters are awaiting instructions."

"Von Sturm is to be brought here to Le Courban at once," replied the brigadier crisply. "Send Colonel Tempest to me."

"Very good, sir," replied the aide-de-camp, and, saluting, withdrew.

It was towards dusk of that same day when a powerful dust-stained touring-car drew up at Wing Headquarters at Le Courban. From the tonneau stepped the boyish Von Sturm, accompanied by a captain of French infantry.

Under the escort of Captain Stuart, Von Sturm was taken at once to the office of Brigadier-General Clayton, who was seated at a blanket-covered and paper-strewn table. Closing the door, Captain Stuart stepped forward, ranging himself alongside Von Sturm, who, stiffly at attention, was facing the brigadier across the table.

"So you have returned," said Brigadier-General Clayton, his eyes



"I will get Von Sturm with this!" said Pedlar Zor, with a vicious grin. And from a leather belt he half-drew the curved blade of a glittering knife.

taking stock of the boy's drawn and haggard face.

"Yes, sir."

"And do you return as friend or enemy?"

"As friend, sir."

The brigadier nodded.

"Then you are convinced of the truth of your birth?" he said quietly. "You are satisfied that you are an Englishman and the son of Colonel Tempest?"

"I am, sir," replied Von Sturm. "I learned the truth from Zolhoff himself."

The brigadier was silent, his eyes on the boy. And when next he spoke his tones were quiet and level.

"Mr. Tempest," he said—and Von

Sturm started at the unfamiliar name which from henceforth would be his own, "when last you stood before me you swore an oath that, in the event of your being satisfied that you had been tricked by the Germans into bearing arms against your own countrymen, you would be for England, body, heart, and soul, until the end. I use your own words."

Von Sturm inclined his head.

"Those were my words, sir," he said.

Brigadier-General Clayton pushed back his chair and rose to his feet.

"In view of that promise," he said—and there was that in his quiet tones which thrilled the boy—"and because

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we do not doubt your loyalty to England, the country which gave you birth, I am instructed on behalf of His Majesty's Government to offer you a commission in the British Royal Air Force."

He paused, then asked:

"Mr. Tempest, do you accept?"

Again Von Sturm inclined his head.

"I do accept, sir," he answered.

The brigadier held out his hand.

"Boy," he said earnestly, "you yourself have been grievously wronged by those who have plunged the world into war and made a shambles of France and Belgium. That must weigh heavily with you in the fight which, from now onwards, you will wage against those whom once you looked upon as friends. But never forget this—the cause of England is just. She did not seek this war; but she was in honour bound to unsheath the sword—a sword which will not be dried until, with flag of truce, Germany comes suing for peace. And now you will see your father."

There is no need here to probe into the interview which followed between Colonel Tempest and his son. It was of long duration, for these two had much of which to speak.

When it was over the boy went to the quarters which had been allotted him. There he indulged in a cold shower and brisk rub down before donning the khaki uniform which had been laid out for him.

When fully dressed he stood for a moment before his small field mirror. And he knew then that the Hauptmann Guido von Sturm was dead, and that Major Guy Tempest had been born in his stead.

Pedlar Zor!

SLOWLY that eventful day drew to a close, and midnight saw Dr. Zolhoff closeted with General Raschen in his office in the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin.

"Crossed the lines?" Zolhoff paused in his pacing of the floor to almost shout the words at the seated Raschen. "Of course the dog has crossed the lines! Did he not shoot Eberhard down in flames this morning, together with the other three fools who intercepted him?"

"But we do not know that the paper bearing details of our espionage service in Britain was in his possession," said Raschen soothingly.

"No, we do not know!" snarled Zolhoff. "But that does not mean to say that the paper isn't in his possession. Blood and fury! But to think that this has happened—"

He broke off and resumed his savage pacing of the floor, to halt abruptly and fling at Raschen:

"Do you not realise, you stupid fool, that the treacherous bound knows the strength and personnel of almost every German aerodrome? He can give information worth its weight in gold a thousand times over, to our enemies. Our aerodromes will be bombed night and day from now onwards—"

"You seem," cut in General Raschen coldly, "to forget that we have an Air Force capable of protecting our aerodromes, Herr Doktor."

"Have we?" answered Zolhoff gratingly. "I doubt it! Already our Fokkers are finding they cannot live with the fighting machines which the Englishers are introducing into the

field. I tell you—and I say it, God help us, because I believe it in my heart—that the tide of war is turning against us on the Western Front—"

He broke off as there came a sharp, imperative knock at the door.

"Come in!" he called harshly.

In response to the summons, the door opened and a grey-clad orderly entered the room.

"An urgent communication received by wireless code from Mannheim, Herr Doktor!" he said crisply, holding out a thin, grey slip of paper.

With shaking hands, Zolhoff snatched it and read:

"Urgent."

"Strictly private and confidential."

"At five p.m. to-day Guido von Sturm arrived at British Wing Headquarters at Le Courban. Under the name and rank of Major Guy Tempest he has accepted a commission in the British Royal Air Force."

"From—Number 37."

Passionately, Zolhoff crumpled the message in his hand and wheeled on the orderly.

"Number thirty-seven!" he rapped. "Who is he?"

"Herr Offer," replied the orderly.

"He is masquerading as a peasant in the village of Le Courban. His papers are to the effect that he has been rejected for service with the French Army owing to lung trouble."

"Then this," rapped Zolhoff, "can be taken as absolutely authentic! It has been corroborated!"

"It has been corroborated, Herr Doktor," assented the orderly.

"Send Pedlar Zor to me," commanded Zolhoff harshly. "He is in attendance here, by my instructions!"

"Very good, Herr Doktor!" replied the orderly.

Saluting smartly, he withdrew. Zolhoff wheeled on Raschen.

"There," he snarled, "I told you he had crossed the lines. Number thirty-seven has got word through quickly. Mark him down for promotion and reward. It is good work—but terrible news!"

He turned to the door as it was opened, and a small, wiry man with a swarthy countenance and dark, beady eyes entered the room. The newcomer was dressed in shoddy civilian garb; and none to look at him would think that, in him, Germany numbered one of her most famous spies.

Before the War, this man, Pedlar Zor, had done splendid work for the Fatherland beyond the frontiers of Germany, and since the commencement of hostilities he had been instrumental in running to earth more than a dozen allied Secret Service agents in Germany.

Merciless he was, and cunning as a rat. And there was something rat-like about him now as, clutching his cap, he stood watching Zolhoff with his bright little eyes.

"Listen to me!" said Zolhoff harshly. "To-night you will make preparations to cross the British lines. One of our machines will drop you under cover of darkness in the vicinity of Le Courban. There is a man there whom you must get, and you will not return to Germany until he is dead!"

"His name?" mumbled Pedlar Zor.

"Is Major Guy Tempest, of the British Air Force," answered Zolhoff. "Late Hauptmann Guido von

Sturm of the Imperial Air Service of Germany!"

"I know him," nodded Pedlar Zor.

"He is a traitor to his country," went on Zolhoff harshly, "and possesses information which he must never live to use. Your orders are to kill him, either by a bullet or by a stab in the back. How you assassinate him must be left to you. But his life is forfeit, and you will not return to Germany, under penalty of death, until you return with word that Guy Tempest is dead!"

"I will not fail," replied Pedlar Zor, and for a moment his broken and tobacco-stained teeth showed in a fleeting, vicious grin. "I will get him, Herr Doktor—with this!"

And from the leather belt below his ragged jacket, he half-drew the curved blade of a glittering knife.

The Black Box!

ZOLHOFF lost no time in making preparations for having Pedlar Zor transferred across the line.

The result of these preparations was that at dusk, some twenty minutes later, a large triple-engined bomber of the G-type stood with engines ticking over on the aerodrome of Elberfeld.

Beside the machine, chatting with his navigating-officer was Lieutenant Lache, the pilot. A peculiar fellow this Lache. Tall, thin, and pale of face, none would have taken him for the brilliant pilot which he undoubtedly was.

He had not long returned from service on the Eastern Front, where the G-type of bombers had been tried out. So successful had been the night operations of Lieutenant Lache, that he had been transferred for service on the Western Front. And because of his fine record he had been selected by Zolhoff for this dangerous mission of dropping Pedlar Zor behind the British lines.

"You have your course plotted?" Lache demanded of Unter-offizier Falb, his youthful navigating-officer.

"Yes, Herr Leutnant," replied Falb. "We should reach the vicinity of Le Courban two hours after midnight."

Lieutenant Lache nodded.

"That is good," he commented. "It will be dark then. For just before the dawn is the darkest hour of all the night."

He turned away towards the machine. "Come," he said, drawing on his flying-gloves. "We will get off."

He paused a moment for a word with the sergeant-mechanic who had been tuning up the three 260 h.p. engines, then clambered up to the forward cockpit, followed by the Unter-offizier Falb.

Settling himself in the pilot's seat, with Falb by his side, Lache took the precaution of running starboard, centre, and port engines up on brief test. He had a long and dangerous flight in front of him, and, although the sergeant-mechanic had assured him that the engines were giving their revs., Lache was never one to place too much confidence in the word of others.

Satisfied, however, that the engines were giving their revs., he closed the throttle, and, snapping down his goggles, turned to Falb.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Yes, Herr Leutnant," answered the navigating-officer.

Leaning forward, Lache flicked a

switch on the instrument-board in front of him, blinking the navigation-lights on the tips of his port and starboard wings. In response to this signal that the machine was ready to take off, the yellow beam of a dry battery lamp shone out from the middle of the aerodrome, token that the way was clear.

The drone of the quietly running engines rose to a deep, pulsating roar as Lache opened up the throttle. Bumping and swaying, the bomber moved away from the hangars, swinging into wind. Then, as Lache opened the throttle to full the machine swept forward to rise into the night sky in a long, upward climb.

Twice, as it gained height, the bomber circled the aerodrome, then the pulsating beat of its engines died gradually away as it headed westwards towards the line.

There was no moon, and the blackness of the night was relieved only by the glimmer of stars high in the heavens. Lache had switched off his navigating-lights, and as the machine roared westwards at a height of eight thousand feet, only the thunder of its powerful engines marked the course it took.

Lolling in his seat, his gloved hands gripping the leather-bound control-wheel, Lache's goggle-protected eyes scarce ever strayed from the instrument-board in front of him. Occasionally Falb would rise to his feet and check the course of the bomber by means of the drift indicator on the side of the cockpit.

In the rear cockpit, separated from the forward cockpit by a full ten feet of fuselage, the two German gunners whom Lache was carrying were leaning against the scarf-mountings of their guns, gazing down at the darkened countryside far below.

It matters little here what the thoughts of those two were, but maybe they were grimly wondering if with the dawn they would pass this way again, or if the bomber would be lying a mass of charred and burned-out wreckage behind the British lines.

Presently one of them spoke, his lips to his companion's ear, and jerking downwards with gloved thumb.

"Do you think he's all right?" he said.

The other shook his head.

"I cannot say," he answered; then added with a shudder. "But I would not be him—no, not for ten thousand marks, I would not! It is the box—so like a coffin."

Crouching on the floor of the cockpit he thrust his head through the trap-door, which allowed of the lower gun firing downwards, and peered at a long, black box which was slung beneath the bomb rack in the rear of the under-carriage.

Then, straightening up, he turned again to his companion.

"To think," he said, "that a live man lies in that box! Ah, the nerve of these spies!"

"They earn their pay," responded his companion sententiously.

On and on through the night sky roared the bomber. An hour passed, and then another, and towards the south Lache saw the wheeling beams of the searchlights guarding Saarbrücken and Metz. He touched Falb on the arm.

"How long now before we cross the line?" he asked.

"Forty minutes," replied Falb.

Rising to his feet, he bent over the drift indicator, then turned to Lache.

"Alter your course to one hundred and seventy-five degrees," he said.

Lache's left foot moved a fraction on the rudder-bar, and the nose of the

machine swung correspondingly until the compass needle settled steadily at the 175 mark.

Ten kilometres eastwards a long string of "flaming onions"—green balls of fire—sailed up into the night, and Falb knew that they were passing a German aerial lighthouse.

The bomber was flying now at a height of ten thousand feet, its absolute ceiling. Lache's eyes behind his goggles were grim, for ahead he could see a distant sinuous intermittent line of star shells and Vary lights, with here and there the horizontal wheeling ray of a searchlight.

It was the trenches!

"Pass word to the gunners to keep a good look-out!" said Lache curtly; and obediently Falb spoke into the short-length telephone which connected with the rear cockpit.

But the gunners did not need the warning; they know only too well that they were rapidly approaching the danger area, and never for an instant did their hands stray far from the spade-grips of their guns.

At ten thousand feet the bomber passed over the trenches. Then, without warning, there came a sudden whip-like crack, plainly audible above the thunder of the engines. Lurid flame spouted vividly, high in the sky round the bomber, and puffs of white smoke hung wraith-like for a moment in the darkness, then merged into nothingness and were gone.

It was shrapnel from the British and French anti-aircraft batteries.

Stabbing up through the night came the golden, probing beams of searchlights. Criss-crossing like scissors they swept the sky, darting here and there in an effort to locate the bomber.

The machine was lit up for a moment in a blinding glare as a wheeling beam paused on it then passed on into the night. Back came the beam, picking out the fore part of the bomber in every detail, and ray after ray darted across the sky, fastening on the machine

and turning it into the semblance of a huge silver monster of the night.

Shoving forward the control column, the Lieutenant Lache took the bomber diving earthwards with engines thundering at full revolutions. But still the rays clung tenaciously to him, and the lurid, vomiting flames of the exploding shrapnel were very close.

Pressing on the rudder-bar, Lache turned the bomber in a sickening downward swoop which took him dropping down into the darkness, and left the searchlight rays groping aimlessly in the void above.

Levelled up, he brought the machine on to her former course of one hundred and seventy-five degrees and thundered on through the night. But he had lost two thousand feet of altitude in that wild downward dive.

Behind him the searchlight rays shut down one by one, and the anti-aircraft guns were stilled. The first barrage had been successfully passed, but there were others ahead.

Minutes passed, then around the machine came again the crackling of exploding shrapnel, and the darkness was split by the searchlight beams of the second barrage. Vicious, lurid flashes leapt into being above and below the bomber, for now the shrapnel had started in earnest.

With engines thundering at full revolutions, the bomber tore on. Her nose was down, and ceaselessly the feet of Lache pressed alternatively on the rudder-bar, causing the machine to pursue a wide, zigzag course.

Once a blinding glare flooded the forward cockpit as a searchlight beam settled on the machine. Instantly the control wheel whirled in Lache's hands, and pulling a sharp wing-turn, he lost the beam.

The youthful Falb, whose first flight with Lache this was, felt a strange confidence in the grim-faced pilot who was so coolly and skilfully evading the

(Continued on page 28.)

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searchlight beams which were desperately endeavouring to reveal the bomber to the eyes of the anti-aircraft gunners below.

The barrage was passed, and the bomber roared on. Leaning forward, Lache drew Fali's attention to the compass. Fali nodded and bent his head over his map. Then, rising to his feet, he again checked the course of the machine by means of the drift indicator.

"One hundred and eighty-four degrees," he said, turning to the pilot.

Under rodder, the nose of the bomber swung until the compass-needle steadied at the 184 mark. The altimeter was registering no more than four thousand feet. For a few minutes Lache held her at that, then suddenly Fali touched him on the arm and pointed downwards into the night.

"We are approaching!" rapped Lache.

"We are within forty kilometres of Le Comban," assented Fali. "There is a stretch of ground here which will be suitable."

The gloved hand of Lache closed on the throttle, and the roar of the engines died away. Pushing forward the control-stick, he threw the bomber on to its gliding angle and, with engines barely ticking over, the machine commenced to drop silently earthwards from out of the night.

Slowly the altimeter needle dropped back from four thousand feet—three thousand feet—one thousand five hundred feet—five hundred feet. The two gunners were lying side by side on the floor of the rear cockpit, watching through the gun-trap the long black box which was suspended below the bomb tuck.

(Will Peilar Nor succeed in landing safely in Le Comban? If he does, Guy Tempest's life will be entirely in his hands, unless— Anyway, you'll read exactly what happens in next week's thrilling instalment of this powerful War story.)

THE FOE FROM THE SKY!

(Continued from page 24.)

"The question, Mr. Locke, is this—will the presence of his friends make the journey safer for Wun Lung, in your opinion?"

"Undoubtedly!" said Locke.

"That settles the matter, then," said Colonel Wharton. "I leave it to Harry to decide for himself."

Wharton smiled.

"I'm jolly well going!" he said. And his uncle gave him a nod of approval.

"Sink or swim together," said Johnny Bull.

"Hear, hear!"

"That, then, is settled," said Locke.

"It will be necessary to make a few preparations for the journey. Fortunately, I have been in China, and shall be able to tell you exactly what you will need on the voyage. As I had no doubt what Mr. Wun's decision would be, I have already made some arrangements—and we must start without delay. On the third day from now we shall leave Folkestone by the steamer for France; and at Marseilles we shall find a steam-yacht, which will take us on the rest of the journey. That, I think, will be safer than travelling by the ordinary P. & O. route, in the circumstances. My one object will be to place Wun Lung safely in his father's house."

And so it was settled.

The next few days were busy ones.

There was only one dissatisfied face—and that was the podgy countenance of William George Bunter.

Colonel Wharton and the juniors paid a visit to London to make the necessary purchases for the voyage; and Bunter watched them go with a morose eye. He watched them with a morose eye when they returned. During the whole interval before they left for good, Bunter's fat brow was morose.

But when the day came for the start Bunter came down early. If the party had expected, or hoped, to depart while

Bunter was still snoring they were disappointed. Bunter was on the spot.

A car came round for them, and baggage was piled on it. Good-byes were said. There was no secret about the departure. Locke had no doubt that it would be watched by the emissaries of Tang Wang; but he was willing to let the enemy know that Wun Lung was leaving Wharton Lodge—in fact, he desired to let them know. Once they knew that the son of Wun Chung Lung was no longer there, the shadow of deadly peril would be lifted from Wharton Lodge. The party packed in the car, and Locke took the wheel. Then Billy Bunter rolled up.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"I say, I'm not staying on here!" said Bunter, with a sniff. "I'm going to stay with my uncle—"

"Right-ho! Good-bye!"

"At Folkestone."

"Oh!"

"So you might as well give me a lift," said Bunter.

"Oh!"

There was a pause; and then the juniors made room in the car.

"Hop in!" said Wharton.

Bunter hopped in.

The car rolled away. As it dashed along the road to Wimford a man with slanting eyes watched it from another car—and that other car glided in their wake. Locke glanced back at it, smiled, and drove on.

Billy Bunter settled down comfortably with a fat grin on his fat face. He had a lift to Folkestone, where the party were to take the Channel boat. At Folkestone they were going to say "Good-bye!" to Bunter—at least, they thought they were! But William George Bunter had his own ideas about that!

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the next story in this grand holiday series, entitled: "ALL ABOARD FOR CHINA!" You'll vote it the real goods!)

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